

A SHORT and EASIE
METHOD
WITH THE
DEISTS,
WHEREIN THE
CERTAINTY
OF THE
Christian Religion

Is demonstrated by *Infallible Proof* from

FOUR RULES,
WHICH ARE

Incompatible to any *Imposture* that ever
yet has been, or that can possibly be.

In a LETTER *to a* FRIEND.

The Sixth Edition.

L O N D O N:

Printed for GEORGE STRAHAN, at the Golden-Ball, against the Royal-Exchange, in Cornhill. MDCCXXVI.

METHOD

DEIST

CERTAINLY

Christian Religion

FOUR RULES

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND

THE GREAT COMMON

Printed for GEORGE STRAHAN, at the God-
down, in the Strand, in the City of London.
MDCCLXXVI.



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T H E
P R E F A C E.

I.  Have been desir'd to say something more concerning Apollonius Tyanæus, hereafter mention'd, p. 41. tho' it lies upon the Deists to produce him, if they dare pitch upon him as an Instance, to which they are fairly invited: But herein only shew their Modesty; they are bashful in the Face of an Argument, but where a Jest, a Grin, or a Laugh will carry it off, they are unmerciful, and triumph clamorously. They have brought upon the Stage no Competitor to our Blessed Saviour, equal to their Apollonius. Therefore I nam'd him, and provok'd them, (but I cannot) to bring it to a Tryal. For the sake therefore of some Readers, who may not know the Story, I will here give this short Account of him.

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First

First then, let it be observ'd, That what Account we have of Apollonius Tyanæus, is from Philostratus, who liv'd an Hundred Years after the Time in which this Apollonius is said to have flourish'd.

Whence had Philostratus this? He says, from the Book of one Damis; who had been a Companion of Apollonius's. How came Philostratus by this Book? He says, that an Acquaintance of Damis's brought the Empress Julia to the Knowledge of his Commentaries, which till then had not been publish'd. (I give it you in the Words of Mr. Blount's Translation.) And that the Empress commanded Philostratus to transcribe those Commentaries, and bestow some pains on the Relations contain'd in them. What Pains was this Only to transcribe? No, that was small Pains, and not fit to be impos'd upon so great an Orator as Philostratus, it was the Office of a Clerk. But, it seems, this Book of Damis's was so poorly wrote, as not fit to be expos'd to view, at least of the Empress, who, as Philostratus tells us, was much addicted to the study of Rhetorick. For, (says he) Damis had given a plain but unclegant Description of them, i. e. of the Acts of Apollonius, Therefore the Pains that Philostratus took, he tells us, was upon the Relations of Apollonius that were in the Commentaries of Damis. And to fit them for the Ear of an Empress, who lov'd Rhetorick, alias, romancing and fine Stories. So that we are not sure we have one Word of the Commentaries of
Damis

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Damis. *But this we are sure of, That we have them only as they were new dress'd, and vamt by an Orator, to please the Fancy of a Rhetorical Lady.*

But, which is more, Philostratus does not pretend, that he confin'd himself to the Commentaries of Damis. For he tells us, (ibid. l. i. c. 3.) That in composing these Books of his, he had gather'd together the dispersed Relations of Apollonius into one Volume. And names another Author, one Moeragenes, who had wrote four Books concerning Apollonius. But he says, that there is no Credit to be given to them. Why? Because, (says he) Moeragenes, in his Books, seemeth to be altogether ignorant of his (Apollonius's) Actions. It seems they were not so romantick, as the Commentaries of Damis, and so less fit for an Entertainment to the Emperess. But they do not seem to be the less true for that. And Philostratus gives no other Reason against them, i. e. They were not for his Purpose, which was, to compose something new and surprizing, to gratifie the Emperess.

Let me observe here, That this was an Age, wherein the Melesiaca, or feign'd Romantick Stories were much in vogue: Such as Heliodorus his Ethiopicks, The Amours of Clitophon and Leucippe, &c. And it is very probable, that Philostratus living, as he tells, at Court, wou'd endeavour not to be out of the Fashion.

And indeed, if he had been to compose a Romance, to have appear'd like any thing of Truth, he cou'd not have introduc'd it upon less Authority,

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thority, and more precarious a Foundation than this which he has given for his Hero Apollonius.

So extreamly slight, that some very learned Men have, not without Reason, doubted whether ever there was such a Man as this Apollonius.

It is true that Origen (Contr. Cels.) does mention him. But so he did likewise the Recognition of St. Clement, (Tom. 3. Comment. in Genes. in Philocal. c. 23.) which now are taken for granted to have been wrote only in his Name. And it is no strange thing, that some wise and learned Men may be impos'd upon, in Matters of this Nature.

But neither wise nor foolish, that have Eyes in their Heads, can be Impos'd upon in the four Marks hereafter given p. 5. whereby to ascertain the Truth of any Matter of Fact. And the Deists not daring to bring the Matter of Fact of Apollonius to the Test of these Rules: All that they can possibly infer from their Legends, is, That perhaps they may be true. Whereas, they must acknowledge, unless they will deny the Certainty of all their Senses, That the Matters of Fact of Moses, and of Christ, are certainly, undubitably, and infallibly true.

And there is almost the same Certainty, That those of Apollonius must be false. Because, as Men cannot be impos'd upon in such notorious Matters of Fact: It is next to the same Impossibility, That they should forget them; at least, so soon as were these which are told of Apollonius.

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Ionius. For example, his freeing the City of Ephesus from the Plague. His vanishing out of the Presence of Domitian, and his Court, when he was arraign'd before him. And his familiar Converse with many other Kings, and Wonders done before them; and the mighty Estimation, even to Adoration, which he is thereby said to have obtain'd all over the World.

Now is it possible, That all this could be so totally forgot, as that no Mention at all should be made of it for a hundred Years after these things were said to be done? Insomuch that Philostratus complains, in the Introduction to his Legend, (l. i. c. i.) That whereas Pythagoras, and other ancient Philosophers, who had liv'd many Ages before, were still remember'd with great Veneration, yet that Apollonius, who, as he says, Came nearer to Divine Wisdom than Pythagoras himself, is not yet known among Men--- tho' he lived neither very long ago, nor yet very lately,

Was it possible, that the Death of so famous a Person should not have been greatly notic'd? And his Sepulchre honour'd and visited? Yet Philostratus tells there was no Certainty of the Place where he died: That some said it was at Ephesus; some at Rhodes; and some at Crete. And that his Sepulchre could no where be found. To help this, some bestow'd an Apotheosis upon him. And would have it, That he was taken up into Heaven. But did any body see it? No, That is not so much as alledged. Nor could Philostratus believe it, who said that

he had travell'd far and near to find out his Sepulchre, but cou'd not hear of it.

And if he was so universally famous as Philostratus has represented him, cou'd Moeragenes have wrote his Life, and be altogether ignorant of his Actions, as Philostratus has accused him? Moeragenes wrote before Philostratus; and therefore had better Reason to know. And if Philostratus had transmitted to us the Commentaries of Moeragenes, as well as what Helps he took out of those of Damis, or father'd upon him; We shou'd no Doubt, have had a more moderate Account of Apollonius; since Philostratus does confess, that for that only Reason he had rejected the Books of Moeragenes. And if they were in being when he wrote, he was under a Necessity of saying something against them (tho' what he has said confirms them the more) because they gave the Lie so notoriously to his new Romance of Apollonius.

But now, to sum up all, let us suppose to the utmost, that all this said Romance were true, what wou'd this amount to? Only that Apollonius did such things, What then? What if he were so virtuous a Person, as that God shou'd have given him the Power to work several Miracles? This wou'd no ways hurt the Argument that is here brought against the Deists: Because Apollonius set up no new Religion, nor did he pretend that he was sent with any Revelation from Heaven, to introduce any new sort of the Worship of God. So
that

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that it is of no Consequence to the World, whether these were true or pretended Miracles: Whether Apollonius was an honest Man, or a Magician: Or whether ever there was such a Man or not. For he left no Law or Gospel behind him, to be receiv'd upon the Credit of those Miracles which he is said to have wrought. And therefore, if he did work such, it is no Prejudice to the Truth, either of the Law or the Gospel. So that this whole Parallel betwixt Apollonius and Christ, is altogether impertinent, and shews, at once the Impotence as well as Malice of those who propose it.

2. This brings me from Apollonius, to his new Editor amongst us, Charles Blount. For I find my self oblig'd to account for what I have said of him, p. 41. I have been told, (since the first Edition of this) That it has disoblig'd some Friends (far from my Intention) who for Relation or Acquaintance had a Regard to the Person of Mr. Blount, tho' not to his Principles; and think that I have us'd him too coarsly, he being a Gentleman.

But when it is consider'd, how he has treated our Blessed Lord and Saviour, like the Soldiers who bow'd the Knee to Him, and spit in his Face; Who cry'd Hail, King of the Jews! to mock him the more outrageously. That not only in his Comments upon this History of Apollonius, but in his Great Diana, his Oracles of Reason, and in all his Works, he set himself, with his whole Might, to op-
pose

pose and ridicule the Birth, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and all that is said of our Christ and God in the Holy Gospel, and all Revealed Religion; of which I cou'd give Instances out of Number, but they are not fit to be heard by christian Ears; and it wou'd gratifie the Deists but to have them nam'd.

Again considering, that his most pernicious Books (many of which were well nigh lost) are of late, carefully collected and re-printed (to the Scandal of a christian Country) and dispersed, to poison the Nation; I say, all this being duly considered, I have no Apology to make, for calling this Man execrable: Nor can I retract or compound it, seeing it is come to this, that either his blasphemous Works, (who set himself at the Head of the Deists, and after whom they now copy) or else the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, must remain execrable.

Nor would I give better Quarter to the greatest King upon Earth, who shou'd do the same: But, after the Example our holy Apostle, I would say, I do say, let him, or an Angel from Heaven, who durst thus presume, be accursed.

If Mr. Blount had meddl'd only with the Argument, and oppos'd what he cou'd, in that Method; I wou'd have thought him worthy of civil Treatment; as I will any other of the Deists, who shall answer the Reasons I have here set down. And if he can overthrow them, and give me better on his Side,

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Side, I confess I shall then be tempted to turn Infidel with him. And to this I invite them, I provoke them. But if they will not (as there is little Appearance that they will) then, let them never more value themselves as Men of Sense, at least, let none others do so, while they refuse to be determin'd by Reason.

But if instead of Reason, they have Recourse, like Mr. Blount, to their old Topick of Buffoonry, and shew their Parts in witty Satire and scorn, and laugh out — Priest-Craft — for an Hour together; let them enjoy the Fruit of their Labours, and what they justly deserve, to be the Admiration of Fools, and Contempt of all wise and good Men. And so I leave them.



THE



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A Short



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METHOD

WITH THE

DEISTS.

S I R,

I.



N answer to yours of the Third Instant, I much condole with you your unhappy Circumstances, of being placed amongst such Company, where, as you say, you continually hear the Sacred

Scriptures, and the Histories therein contain'd, particularly of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, and all *Revealed Religion* turn'd into Ridicule, by

B

Men

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Men who set up for *Sense* and *Reason*. And they say, That there is no greater Ground to believe in *Christ*, than in *Mahomet*; that all these Pretences to *Revelation* are *Cheats*, and ever have been among *Pagans*, *Jews*, *Mahometans*, and *Christians*; That they are all alike Impositions of *Cunning* and *Designing Men*, upon the *Credulity* at first, of *simple* and *unthinking* People, till, their Numbers encreasing, their *Delusions* grew *popular*, came at last to be establish'd by *Laws*; and then the Force of *Education* and *Custom* gives a Byass to the Judgments of after Ages, till such *Deceits* come really to be believ'd, being receiv'd upon *Trust* from the Ages foregoing, without examining into the *Original* and *Bottom* of them. Which these our modern Men of *Sense*, (as they desire to be esteem'd) say, That they only do, that they only have their *Judgments* freed from the slavish Authority of *Precedents* and *Laws*, in Matters of *Truth*, which, they say, ought only to be decided by *Reason*; tho' by a prudent Compliance with *Popularity* and *Laws*, they preserve themselves from *Outrage*, and Legal *Penalties*; for none of their Complexion are addicted to *Sufferings*, or *Martyrdom*.

Now, Sir, that which you desire from me, is, some short Topic of *Reason*, if such can be found, whereby, without running to *Authorities*, and the intricate Mazes of *Learning*, which breed long Disputes, and which these Men of *Reason* deny by wholesale, though they

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they can give no *Reason* for it, only suppose that *Authors* have been Trump'd upon us, *Interpolated*, and *Corrupted*, so that no Strefs can be laid upon them, tho' it cannot be shewn wherein they are so *Corrupted*; which, in Reason, ought to lie upon them to prove, who alledge it; otherwise it is not only a *Precarious*, but a *Guilty Plea*: And the more, that they refrain not to quote Books on their side, for whose Authority there are no better, or not so good Grounds. However, you say, it makes your Disputes endless, and they go away with Noise and Clamour, and a Boast, That there is nothing, at least nothing *Certain*, to be said on the *Christian* side. Therefore you are desirous to find some *One Topic of Reason*, which should demonstrate the Truth of the *Christian* Religion, and at the same time, distinguish it from the *Impostures* of *Mahomet*, and the Old *Pagan* World: That our *Deists* may be brought to this *Test*, and be either oblig'd to renounce their *Reason*, and the common *Reason* of *Mankind*, or to submit to the clear Proof, from *Reason*, of the *Christian* Religion; which must be such a *Proof*, as no *Imposture* can pretend to, otherwise it cannot prove the *Christian* Religion not to be an *Imposture*. And, whether such a Proof, one single Proof, (to avoid Confusion) is not to be found out, you desire to know from me.

And you say, that you cannot imagine but there must be such a *Proof*, because every *Truth* is in it self *Clear*, and *One*; and there-

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fore that *One* Reason for it, if it be the true Reason, must be sufficient; and, if *sufficient*, it is better than *many*; for *Multiplicity* confounds, especially to weak Judgments.

Sir, you have impos'd an hard Task upon me, I wish I could perform it. For tho' *every Truth* is *One*, yet our *Sight* is so feeble, that we cannot (always) come to it *directly*, but by many *Inferences*, and laying of things together.

But I think, that in the Case before us, there is such a *Proof* as you require, and I will set it down as *Short* and *Plain* as I can.

II. First then, I suppose, that the *Truth of the Doctrine of CHRIST* will be sufficiently evinced, if the *Matters of Fact*, which are recorded of him in the *Gospels* be *True*; for his *Miracles*, if *True*, do vouch the *Truth* of what he delivered.

The same is to be said as to *Moses*. If he brought the Children of *Israel* through the *Red-Sea*, in that *miraculous* Manner, which is related in *Exodus*, and did such other wonderful things as are there told of him, it must necessarily follow, that he was sent from GOD: These being the strongest Proofs we can desire, and which every *Deist* will confess he wou'd acquiesce in, if he saw them with his Eyes. Therefore the Stress of this Cause will depend upon the Proof of these *Matters of Fact*.

I. And the Method I will take, is, *First*, To lay down such *Rules*, as to the *Truth of Matters*

Matters of Fact, in General, that where they All meet, such *Matters of Fact* cannot be false. And then, *Secondly*, To shew that all these *Rules* do meet in the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*; and that they do not meet in the *Matters of Fact* of *Mahomet*, of the *Heathen Deities*, or can possibly meet in any *Imposture* whatsoever.

2. The *Rules* are these, 1st. That the *Matters of Fact* be such, as that *Mens outward Senses*, their *Eyes* and *Ears*, may be *Judges* of it. 2. That it be done *Publickly*, in the *Face of the World*. 3. That not only *publick Monuments* be kept up in *memory* of it, but some *outward Actions* to be perform'd. 4. That such *Monuments* and such *Actions* or *Observances* be *Instituted* and do commence from the *Time* that the *Matter of Fact* was done.

3. The *Two* first *Rules* make it impossible for any such *Matter of Fact* to be impos'd upon *Men*, at the *Time* when such *Matter of Fact* was said to be done, because every *Man's Eyes* and *Senses* would contradict it. For Example, Suppose any *Man* shou'd pretend, that *Yesterday* he divided the *Thames*, in presence of all the *People of London*, and carried the whole *City*, *Men*, *Women*, and *Children*, over to *Southwark*, on dry Land, the *Waters* standing like *Walls* on both sides: I say, it is morally impossible that he could persuade the *People of London*, that this was true, when every *Man*, *Woman*, and *Child* could contradict him,

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and say, That this was a notorious Falshood, for that they had not seen the *Thames* so divided, or had gone over on dry Land. Therefore I take it for Granted, (and, I suppose, with the Allowance of all the *Deists* in the World) that no such Imposition could be put upon Men, at the *Time* when such *publick Matter of Fact* was said to be done.

4. Therefore it only remains that such *Matter of Fact* might be invented some time after, when the Men of that Generation, wherein the Thing was said to be done, are all past and gone; and the Credulity of after Ages might be impos'd upon, to believe that Things were done in former Ages, which were not.

And for this, the *Two* last *Rules* secure us as much as the *Two* first *Rules*, in the former Case; for whenever such a *Matter of Fact* came to be invented, if not only *Monuments* were said to remain of it, but likewise that publick *Actions* and *Observances* were constantly us'd ever since the *Matter of Fact* was said to be done, the Deceit must be detected, by no such *Monuments* appearing, and by the Experience of every *Man, Woman, and Child*, who must know that no such *Actions*, or *Observances* were ever us'd by them. For Example, Suppose I should now invent a Story of such a Thing, done a Thousand Years ago, I might, perhaps, get some to believe it; but if I say, that not only such a Thing was done, but that from that Day to this, every Man, at the Age of *Twelve* Years, had a *Joint* of his little *Finger*

ger cut off; and that every Man in the Nation did want a *Joint* of such a *Finger*; and that this *Institution* was said to be Part of the *Matter of Fact* done so many Years ago, and vouch'd as a *Proof* and *Confirmation* of it, and as having descended, without Interruption, and been constantly practis'd, in memory of such *Matter of Fact* all along from the Time that such *Matter of Fact* was done: I say, it is impossible I should be believ'd in such a Case, because every one could contradict me, as to the *Mark* of cutting off a *Joint* of the *Finger*; and that being Part of my original *Matter of Fact*, must demonstrate the whole to be false.

III. Let us now come to the *Second Point*, to shew, that the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, have all these *Rules*, or *Marks* before mention'd; and that neither the *Matters of Fact* of *Mahomet*, or what is reported of the *Heathen-Deities*, have the like; and that no *Imposture* can have them all.

1. As to *Moses*, I suppose it will be allow'd me, That he could not have persuaded 600000 Men, that he had brought them out of *Egypt*, thro' the *Red-Sea*; fed them 40 Years, without *Bread*, by miraculous *Manna*, and the other *Matters of Fact* recorded in his Books, if they had not been true. Because every Man's *Senses* that were then alive, must have contradicted it. And therefore he must have impos'd upon all their *Senses*, if he could have made them believe it, when it was *false* and no

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such Things done. So that here are the *First* and *Second* of the above-mentioned *Four* Marks.

For the same Reason, it was equally impossible for him to have made them receive his *Five* Books, as Truth, and not to have rejected them, as a manifest *Imposture*; which told of all these Things as done before their *Eyes*, if they had not been so done. See how positively he speaks to them, *Deut. xi. 2. to Ver. 8. And know you this day, for I speak not with your Children, which have not known, and which have not seen the Chastisement of the Lord your God, his Greatness, his mighty Hand, and his stretched-out Arm, and his Miracles, and his Acts, which he did in the midst of Ægypt, unto Pharaoh, the King of Ægypt, and unto all his Land, and what he did unto the Army of Ægypt, unto their Horses, and to their Chariots; how he made the water of the Red-Sea to overflow them as they pursued after you; and how the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day: And what he did unto you in the Wilderness, untill ye came into this Place; and what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the Sons of Eliab, the Son of Reuben, how the Earth opened her Mouth, and swallowed them up, and their Households, and their Tents, and all the Substance that was in their possession, in the midst of all Israel. But your Eyes have seen all the great Acts of the Lord, which he did, &c.*

From hence we must suppose it impossible that these Books of *Moses*, (if an *Imposture*) could have been invented and put upon the
 People.

People who were then alive, when all these things were said to be done.

The utmost therefore that even a *Suppose* can stretch to, is, That these Books were wrote in some Age after *Moses*, and put out in his Name.

And to this, I say, That if it was so, it was impossible that those *Books* should have been receiv'd, as the *Books* of *Moses*, in that Age wherein they may have been suppos'd to have been first invented. Why? Because they speak of themselves as deliver'd by *Moses*, and kept in the *Ark* from his time. *And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this Law in a Book, until they were finished; that Moses commanded the Levites who bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this Book of the Law, and put it in the side of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee, Deut. xxxi. 24, 25, 26.* And there was a *Copy* of this *Book* to be left likewise with the *King*. *And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the Throne of his Kingdom, that he shall write him a Copy of this Law in a Book, out of that which is before the Priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his Life: That he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the Words of this Law and these Statutes to do them, Deut. xvii. 18, 19.*

Here you see that this *Book* of the *Law* speaks of it self, not only as an *History* or *Relation* of what things were then done: But as
the

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the *standing* and *municipal Law* and *Statutes* of the *Nation* of the *Jews*, binding the *King* as well as the *People*.

Now, in whatever Age after *Moses* you will suppose this *Book* to have been *Forged*, it was impossible it cou'd be receiv'd as Truth; because it was not then to be found, either in the *Ark* or with the *King*, or any where else: For when first *Invented*, every body must know, that they had never heard of it before.

And therefore they cou'd less believe it to be the *Book* of their *Statutes*, and the standing *Law* of the *Land*, which they had all along received, and by which they had been *Governed*.

Cou'd any Man, now at this Day, invent a *Book* of *Statutes* or *Acts of Parliament* for *England*, and make it pass upon the Nation as the only *Book* of *Statutes* that ever they had known? As impossible was it for the *Books* of *Moses* (if they were invented in any Age after *Moses*) to have been receiv'd for what they declare themselves to be, *viz.* The *Statutes* and *Municipal Law* of the Nation of the *Jews*: And to have perswaded the *Jews*, that they had *Own'd* and *Acknowledg'd* these *Books*, all along from the Days of *Moses*, to that Day in which they were first invented, that is, that they had *Own'd* them before they had ever so much as *Heard* of them. Nay, more, the whole Nation must, in an Instant, forget their former *Laws* and *Government*, if they cou'd receive these *Books*, as being their *Former Laws*. And they cou'd

not

not otherwise receive them, because they vouch'd themselves so to be. Let me ask the *Deists* but this One short Question, was there ever a *Book of Sham-Laws*, which were not the *Laws* of the *Nation*, *Pam'd* upon any *People*, Since the World began? If not, With what Face can they say this of the *Book of Laws* of the *Jews*? Why will they say that of them, which they confess impossible in any *Nation*, or among any *People*?

But they must be yet more Unreasonable. For the Books of *Moses* have a further Demonstration of their Truth, than even other *Law-Books* have: For they not only contain the *Laws*, but give an *Historical Account* of their *Institution*, and the *Practice* of them from that Time: As of the *Passover* in Memory of the *Death* of the *First-Born* in *Egypt*: And that the same Num. viii.
17, 18. Day, all the *First-Born* of *Israel*, both of Man and *Beast*, were by a perpetual *Law*, dedicated to *God*: And the *Levites* taken for all the *First-Born* of the Children of *Israel*. That *Aaron's Rod* which budded, was kept in the *Ark*, in Memory of the *Rebellion*, and wonderful *Destruction* of *Korah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*; and for the Confirmation of the *Priesthood* to the *Tribe of Levi*. As likewise the *Pot of Manna*, in Memory of their having been fed with it 40 Years in the Wilderness. That the *Brazen Serpent* was kept (which remained to the Days of *Hezekiah*. 2 *Kin.* xviii. 4.) in Memory of that wonderful Deliverance

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rance by only *Looking* upon it, from the *Bit-ting* of the *Fiery-Serpent*. Num. xxi. 9. The Feast of *Pentecost*, in Memory of the dreadful *Appearance* of *God* upon Mount *Horeb*, &c.

And besides these *Remembrances* of *particu-lar Actions* and *Occurrences*, there were other solemn *Institutions* in Memory of their Deli-verance out of *Egypt*, in the *General*, which in-cluded all the *Particulars*. As of the *Sabbath*. *Deut.* 5. 15. Their *daily Sacrifices*, and *yearly Expiation*; their *New-Moons*, and several *Feasts* and *Fasts*. So that there were *Yearly Monthly, Weekly, Daily Remembrances*, and *Recognitions* of these things.

And, not only so, but the *Books* of the same *Moses* tell us, that a particular *Tribe* (of *Levi*) was *Appointed* and *Consecrated* by *God*, as his *Priests*; by whose *Hands* and none other, the *Sacrifices* of the *People* were to be offer'd, and these solemn *Institutions* to be celebrated. That it was *Death* for any other to approach the *Altar*. That their *High Priest* wore a *Glorious Mitre*, and *Magnificent Robes* of *God's* own *Contrivance*, with the miraculous *Urim* and *Thummim* in his *Breast-plate*, whence the *divine Responses* were given.

Numbers
xxvii. 21.

Deut. xvii.
8. to 13.

1 Chr. xxiii.
4.

That at his *Word*, the *King*, and all the *People* were to go out, and to come in. That these *Levites* were likewise the *Chief Judges*, even in all *Civil Causes*, and that it was *Death* to resist their *Sentence*. Now when-

ever it can be suppos'd that these *Books* of *Moses*

Moses were forged, in some Ages after *Moses*, it is impossible they cou'd have been received as True, unless the *Forgers* could have made the whole Nation believe, that they had received these *Books* from their *Fathers*, had been instructed in them when they were *Children*, and had taught them to their *Children*, moreover, that they had all been circumcised, and did circumcise their *Children*, in pursuance to what was commanded in these *Books*, that they had observed the yearly *Passover*, the weekly *Sabbath*, the *New-Moons*, and all these several *Feasts*, *Fasts*, and *Ceremonies* commanded in these *Books*: That they had never eaten any *Swines* Flesh, or other *Meats* prohibited in these *Books*: That they had a magnificent *Tabernacle*, with a visible *Priesthood* to *Administer* in it, which was confined to the *Tribe of Levi*; over whom was placed a glorious *High Priest*, cloth'd with great and mighty *Prerogatives*; whose *Death* only cou'd deliver those that were fled to the *Cities of Refuge*. And that *Num. xxxv. 25, 28.* these *Priests* were their ordinary *Judges*, even in *Civil* Matters: I say, was it possible to have persuaded a whole *Nation* of Men, that they had *Known* and *Practised* all these Things, if they had not done it? or, *Secondly*, To have received a *Book* for Truth, which said they had *practised* them, and appeal'd to that *Practice*? So that here are the *Third* and *Fourth* of the *Marks* above-mentioned.

But

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But now let us descend to the utmost Degree of *Supposition*, viz. That these Things were *Practised*, before these *Books* of *Moses* were *Forged*; and that these *Books* did only *impose* upon the *Nation*, in making them believe, That they had kept these *Observances* in Memory of such and such Things, as were inserted in those *Books*.

Well then, let us proceed upon this *Supposition*, (however groundless) and now, will not the same *Impossibilities* occur, as in the former Case? For, *First*, This must suppose that the *Jews* kept all these *Observances* in Memory of *Nothing*, or without knowing any thing of their *Original*, or the *Reason* why they kept them. Whereas these very *Observances* did express the *Ground* and *Reason* of their being kept, as the *Passover*, in Memory of God's *Passing-over* the *Children* of the *Israelites*, in that Night wherein he slew all the *First-born* of *Egypt*, and so of the Rest.

But, *Secondly*, Let us suppose, contrary both to *Reason*, and *Matter of Fact*, That the *Jews* did not know any *Reason* at all why they kept these *Observances*; yet was it possible to put it upon them, That they had kept these *Observances* in Memory of what they had never heard of before that Day, whensoever you will suppose that these *Books* of *Moses* were first *Forged*? For Example, suppose I shou'd now forge some *Romantick* Story, of strange Things done 1000 Years ago, and in
Confirmation

Confirmation of this, should endeavour to persuade the *Christian* World, That they had all along, from that *Day* to this, kept the *First-Day* of the *Week* in Memory of such an *Hero*, an *Appollonius*, a *Barcosbas*, or a *Mahomet*; and had all been *Baptiz'd* in his Name; and *Swore* by his Name, and upon that very *Book*, (which I had then *forged*, and which they never saw before) in their publick *Judicatures*; that this *Book* was their *Gospel* and *Law*, which they had ever since that Time, these 1000 Years past, *universally* receiv'd and own'd, and none other. I would ask any *Deist*, whether he thinks it *possible*, that such a *Cheat* cou'd pass, or such a *Legend* be receiv'd as the *Gospel* of *Christians*; and that they could be made believe, that they never had had any other *Gospel*? The same Reason is as to the *Books* of *Moses*; and must be, as to every *Matter of Fact*, which has all the Four *Marks* before-mentioned; and these *Marks* secure any such *Matter of Fact* as much from being *invented* and *impos'd* in any after *Ages*, as at the Time when such *Matters of Fact* were said to be done.

Let me give one very familiar Example more in this Case. There is the *Stonhenge* in *Salisbury-Plain*, every body knows it; and yet none knows the Reason why those Great *Stones* were set there, or by whom, or in memory of what.

Now suppose I shou'd write a Book to morrow, and tell there, That these *Stones* were
set

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set up by *Hercules, Polyphemus, or Garagantua*, in memory of such and such of their Actions. And, for a further Confirmation of this, shou'd say, in this *Book*, That it was wrote at the *Time* when such Actions were done, and by the very *Actors* themselves, or *Eye-Witnesses*. And that this *Book* had been received as *Truth*, and quoted by *Authors* of the greatest *Reputation* in all *Ages* since. Moreover that this *Book* was well known in *England*, and enjoyn'd by *Act of Parliament* to be taught our *Children*, and that we did teach it to our *Children*, and had been taught it our selves when we were *Children*. I ask any *Deist*, Whether he thinks this could pass upon *England*? And whether, If I, or any other should insist upon it, we should not, instead of being believ'd, be sent to *Bedlam*?

Now let us compare this with the *Stonhenge*, as I may call it, or *Twelve great Stones* set up at *Gilgal*, which is told in the iv. *Chap.* of *Joshua*. There it is said, *Ver. 6.* that the Reason why they were set up, was, that when their Children, in after Ages, should ask the Meaning of it, it should be told them.

And the Thing, in Memory of which they were set up, was such as cou'd not possibly be impos'd upon that *Nation*, at that Time, when it was said to be done, it was as wonderful and miraculous as their Passage thro' the *Red-Sea*.

And withal, free from a very poor Objection, which the *Deists* have advanc'd against that
Miracle

Miracle of the *Red-Sea*: Thinking to salve it by a *Spring-Tide*, with the Concurrence of a *strong Wind*, happening at the same Time; which left the *Sand* so dry, as that the *Israelites* being all *Foot*, might pass thro' the *Owsey* Places and *Holes*, which it must be supposed the *Sea* left behind it: But that the *Egyptians*, being all *Horse* and *Chariots*, stuck in those *Holes*, and were entangl'd, so as that they cou'd not march so fast as the *Israelites*: And that this was all the Meaning of its being said, That God took off their (the *Egyptians*) Chariot-Wheels, that they drove them heavily. So that they wou'd make nothing *extraordinary*, at least, not *miraculous*, in all this Action.

This is advanc'd in *Le Clerc's Dissertations upon Genesis*, lately Printed in *Holland*, and that Part with others of the like Tendency, endeavouring to resolve other *Miracles*, as that of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, &c. into the mere *Natural* Causes, are put into *English* by the well known T. BROWN, for the *Edification* of the *Deists* in *England*.

But these Gentlemen have forgot, that the *Israelites* had great *Herds* of many Thousand *Cattle* with them; which wou'd be apter to *stray*, and fall into those *Holes*, and *Owsey* Places in the *Sand* than *Horses* with *Riders*, who might direct them.

But such *precarious*, and *silly Supposes* are not worth the Answering. If there had been no more in this *Passage* thro' the *Red-Sea* than

than that of a *Spring-Tide*, &c. It had been impossible for *Moses* to have made the *Israelites* believe that Relation given of it in *Exodus*, with so many Particulars, which *Themselves* saw, to be true.

And all those *Scriptures* which magnify this Action, and appeal to it as a full Demonstration of the miraculous Power of God; must be reputed as *Romance* or *Legend*.

I say this, for the Sake of some Christians, who think it no Prejudice to the Truth of the *Holy Bible*, but rather an Advantage, as rendring it more easy to be believ'd, if they can solve whatever seems *Miraculous* in it, by the Power of *second Causes*: And so to make all, as they speak, *Natural*, and *Easie*. Wherein, if they cou'd prevail, the *natural* and *easie* Result wou'd be, not to believe one Word in all those *Sacred-Oracles*. For if things be not, as they are told in any *Relation*, that *Relation* must be *false*. And if *false* in *Part*, we cannot *Trust* to it, either in *Whole*, or in *Part*.

Here are to be excepted. *Mis-Translations*, and *Errors*, either in *Copy*, or in *Press*. But where there is no Room for supposing of these, as where all *Copies* do agree, there we must either *Receive* all, or *Reject* all. I mean in any Book that pretends to be written from the *Mouth* of God. For in other common *Histories*, we may *believe* Part, and *reject* Part, as we see Cause.

But to return. The *Passage* of the *Israelites* over *Jordan*, in Memory of which those

Stones

Stones at Gilgal were set up, is free from all those little *Carpings* before mentioned, that are made as to the *Passage thro' the Red-Sea*. For Notice was given to the *Israelites* the Day before, of this great *Miracle* to be done. *Josh. iii. 5.* It was done at Noon-day, before the whole *Nation*. And when the *Waters of Jordan* were divided, it was not at any *Low Ebb*, but at the Time when that River over-flowed all his *Banks*. ver. 15. And it was done, not by *Winds*, or in length of Time, which *Winds* must take to do it: But all on the sudden, as soon as the *Feet of the Priests that bare the Ark* were dipped in the *Brim of the Water*. Then the *Waters* which came down from above, flood and rose up upon an *Heap*, very far from the *City Adam*, that is beside *Zarctan*: And those that came down toward the *Sea of the Plain*, even the *Salt-Sea*, failed, and were cut off: And the *People* passed over, right against *Jericho*. The *Priests* stood in the midst of *Jordan*, 'till all the *Armies* of *Israel* had passed over. And it came to pass, when the *Priests that bare the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord*, were come up, out of the *Midst of Jordan*, and the *Soles of the Priests Feet* were lift up upon the *Dry-land*, that the *Waters of Jordan* returned unto their *Place*, and flowed over all his *Banks* as they did before. And the *People* came up out of *Jordan*, on the *Tenth Day of the first Month*, and encamped in *Gilgal on the East Border of Jericho*, And those *Twelve Stones* which

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they

they took out of Jordan, did Joshua pitch in Gilgal. And he speak unto the Children of Israel, saying, When your Children shall ask their Fathers in Time to come, saying, what mean these Stones? Then shall ye let your Children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry Land. For the Lord your God dried up the Waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over; as the Lord your God did to the Red-Sea, which He dried up, from before us, until we were gone over. That all the People of the Earth might know the Hand of the Lord, that it is Mighty: That ye might fear the Lord your God for ever.
 Chap. iv. from ver. 18.

If the Passage over the *Red-Sea*, had been only taking Advantage of a *Spring-Tide*, or the like; How wou'd this teach *all the People of the Earth, that the Hand of the Lord was Mighty!* How wou'd a Thing, no more remarkable, have been taken Notice of thro' all the World! How wou'd it have taught *Israel* to fear the Lord, when they must know, that notwithstanding, of all these *Big-Words*, there was so *Little* in it! How cou'd they have believ'd, or receiv'd a *Book*, as *Truth*, which they knew, told the Matter so far otherwise from what it was!

But, as I said, this Passage over *Jordan*, which is here compar'd to that of the *Red-Sea*, is free from all those *Cavils* that are made, as to that of the *Red-Sea*, and is a further
 Attestation

Attestation to it, being said to be done in the same Manner as was that of the *Red-Sea*.

Now, to form our Argument, let Us suppose, that there never was any such Thing as that *Passage over Jordan*. That these Stones at *Gilgal* were set up, upon some other Occasion, in some after Age. And then, that some designing Man invented this Book of *Joshua*, and said, that it was wrote by *Joshua* at that Time. And gave this *Stonage* at *Gilgal*, for a *Testimony* of the *Truth* of it, Wou'd not every Body say to him, We know the *Stonage* at *Gilgal*, but we never heard before of this Reason for it: Nor of this *Book* of *Joshua*: Where has it been all this while? And *Where*, and *How* came you, after so many Ages, to find it? Besides, this Book tells Us, that this *Passage over Jordan* was ordain'd to be taught our *Children*, from Age to Age: And therefore, that they were always to be *Instructed* in the Meaning of that *Stonage* at *Gilgal*, as a *Memorial* of it. But we were never taught it, when we were *Children*; nor did ever teach our *Children* any such Thing. And it is not likely, That cou'd have been forgotten, while so remarkable a *Stonage* did continue, which was set up for that, and no other End.

And if, for the Reasons before given, no such *Imposition* cou'd be put upon Us, as to the *Stonage* in *Salisbury-Plain*; How much less cou'd it be as to the *Stonage* at *Gilgal*?

And if where we know not the *Reason* of a bare naked *Monument*, such a *Sham-Reason* cannot be impos'd; How much more is it impossible to impose upon Us, in *Actions* and *Observances*, which we *celebrate* in Memory of particular *Passages*? How impossible to make Us *forget* those *Passages* which we daily *Commemorate*; and persuade Us, that we had always *kept* such *Institutions* in Memory of what we never heard of before; that is, that We knew it, before We knew it!

And if we find it thus impossible for an *Imposition* to be put upon Us, even in some Things, which have not all the *Four-Marks* before-mentioned: How much more impossible is it, that any *Deceit* shou'd be in that Thing, where all the *Four-Marks* do meet!

This has been shew'd in the *First Place*, as to the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*

2. Therefore I come now (*Secondly*) to shew, that, as in the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, so likewise, all these *Four Marks* do meet in the *Matters of Fact*, which are recorded in the *Gospel*, of Our Blessed *Saviour*. And my Work herein will be the shorter, because all that is said before, of *Moses* and his Books, is every Way applicable to *Christ* and His *Gospel*. His *Works*, and *Miracles* are there said to be done *publickly*, in the Face of the World, as He argu'd to his Accusers, *I spake openly to the World, and in Secret have I said Nothing*, Joh. xviii. 20. It is told, *Acts* ii. 41. that Three thousand at one Time; and, *Acts*

iv. 4. that above Five thousand at another Time, were converted, upon Conviction of what themselves had seen, what had been done publickly before their Eyes, wherein it was impossible to have imposed upon them. Therefore here were the two First of the *Rules* before mention'd.

Then for the Two second: *Baptism* and *the Lord's Supper* were instituted as perpetual *Memorials* of these Things; and they were not instituted in after-Ages, but at the very Time when these Things were said to be done; and have been observed without Interruption, in all Ages through the whole Christian World, down all the Way from that Time to this. And *Christ* Himself did ordain *Apostles*, and other *Ministers* of His Gospel, to *Preach*, and *Administer* these *Sacraments*; and to *Govern* His Church; And that *always, even unto the End of the* Matth. *World.* Accordingly they have con- xxviii. 20. tinu'd by regular *Succession*, to this Day: And, no Doubt, ever shall, while the Earth shall last. So that the Christian *Clergy* are as notorious a *Matter of Fact*, as the *Tribe of Levi* among the *Jews*. And the *Gospel* is as much a *Law* to the *Christians*, as the *Book of Moses* to the *Jews*: And it being Part of the *Matters of Fact* related in the *Gospel*, that such an *Order of Men*, were appointed by *Christ*, and to *continue to the End of the World*; consequently, if the *Gospel* was a *Fiction*, and invented (as it must be) in some Ages after *Christ*; then, at that Time, when it was first invented, there cou'd

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be no such *Order of Clergy*, as deriv'd themselves from the Institution of *Christ*; which must give the *Lye* to the *Gospel*, and demonstrate the whole to be *False*. And the *Matters of Fact* of *Christ* being press'd to be True, no otherwise than as there was, at that Time (whenever the *Deists* will suppose the *Gospel* to be *Forged*) not only publick *Sacraments* of *Christ's* Institution, but an *Order of Clergy*, likewise of his Appointment to *Administer* them: And it being impossible there could be any such Things before they were *Invented*, it is as impossible that they should be *Received* when *Invented*. And therefore, by what was said above, it was as impossible to have impos'd upon Mankind in this Matter, by inventing of it in after Ages, as at the Time when those Things were said to be done.

3. The *Matters of Fact* of *Mahomet*, or what is Fabled of the *Deities*, do all want some of the aforesaid *four* Rules, whereby the Certainty of *Matters of Fact* is demonstrated. First, for *Mahomet*, he pretended to no *Miracles*, as he tells us in his *Alcoran. c. 6. &c.* and those which are commonly told of him pass among the *Mahometans* themselves, but as *Legendary* Fables; and as such are rejected by the *Wise* and *Learned* among them; as the *Legends* of their *Saints* are in the *Church of Rome*, See Dr. *Prideaux* his *Life of Mahomet*, Page 34.

But, in the next Place, those which are told of him, do all want the Two first *Rules* before-

before-mention'd. For his pretended Converse with the *Moon*; his *Mersa*, or Night-Journey from *Mecca* to *Jerusalem*, and thence to *Heaven*, &c. were not performed before any Body. We have only his own Word for them. And they are as groundless as the Delusions of *Fox*, or *Muggleton* among our selves. The same is to be said (in the second Place) of the *Fables* of the *Heathen Gods*, of *Mercury's* stealing Sheep, *Jupiter's* turning himself into a *Bull*, and the like; besides the *Folly* and *Unworthiness* of such *senseless* pretended *Miracles*. And moreover, the Wise among the *Heathen* did reckon no otherwise of these but as *Fables*, which had a *Mythology*, or *Mystical* meaning in them, of which several of them have given us the *Rationale*, or *Explication*. And it is plain enough that *Ovid* meant no other by all his *Metamorphoses*.

It is true, the *Heathen Deities* had their *Priests*: They had likewise *Feasts*, *Games*, and other *publick Institutions* in Memory of them. But all these want the Fourth Mark, viz. That such *Priesthood* and *Institutions* shou'd *Commence* from the Time that such Things as they Commemorate, were said to be done; otherwise they cannot secure after Ages from the *Imposture*, by detecting it, at the Time when first *Invented*, as hath been argu'd before. But the *Bacchanalia*, and other *Heathen Feasts*, were instituted many Ages after what was reported of these Gods was said to be done, and therefore can be no *Proof* of

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of them. And the *Priests* of *Bacchus*, *Apollo*, &c. were not *Ordain'd* by these supposed *Gods*: But were appointed by others, in after Ages, only in *Honour* to them. And therefore these *Orders* of *Priests* are no Evidence to the Truth of the *Matters of Fact*, which are reported of their *Gods*.

IV. Now to apply what has been said, You may challenge all the *Deists* in the World to shew any Action that is *Fabulous*, which has all the four *Rules*, or *Marks* before-mention'd. No, it is impossible. And (to resume a little what is spoke to before) the Histories of *Exodus*, and the *Gospel* cou'd never have been receiv'd, if they had not been true; because the Institution of the Priest-hood of *Levi*, and of *Christ*; of the *Sabbath*, the *Pass-over*, of *Circumcision*, of *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*, &c. are there related, as descending all the Way down from those Times, without Interruption. And it is full as impossible to persuade Men, that they had been *Circumcis'd*, *Baptiz'd*, had *Circumcis'd*, or *Baptiz'd* their *Children*, celebrated *Pass-overs*, *Sabbaths*, *Sacraments*, &c. under the *Government* and *Administration* of a certain *Order* of *Priests*, if they had done none of these Things, as to make them believe that they had gone through *Seas* upon *Dry-Land*, seen the *Dead* raised, &c. And without believing of these, it was impossible that either the *Law*, or the *Gospel*, cou'd have been receiv'd.

And

And the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of *Exodus* and the *Gospel*, being no otherwise press'd upon Men, than as they have practis'd such *publick Institutions*; it is appealing to the *Senses* of Mankind for the *Truth* of them: And makes it impossible for any to have invented such Stories in after Ages, without a palpable Detection of the Cheat, when first invented; as impossible as to have impos'd upon the *Senses* of Mankind, at the Time when such *publick Matters of Fact* were said to be done.

V. I do not say, that every thing which wants these four *Marks* is *False*: But, that nothing can be *False* which has them *All*.

No manner of Doubt that there was such a Man as *Julius Cæsar*, that he fought at *Pharsalia*, was killed in the *Senate-House*: and many other *Matters of Fact* of Antient times, tho' we keep no *publick Observances* in Memory of them.

But this shews that the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses*, and of *Christ* have come down to Us better guarded than any other *Matters of Fact* how true soever.

And yet our Deists who would laugh any Man out of the World, as an irrational *Brute*, that should offer to deny *Cæsar* or *Alexander*, *Homer* or *Virgil*, their *publick Works* and *Actions*; do, at the same time, value themselves as the only Men of *Wit* and *Sense*, of *Free*, *Generous*, and *Unbias'd Judgments* for
ridiculing

ridiculing the Histories of *Moses* and *Christ*, that are infinitely better attested, and guarded with infallible Marks, which the others want.

VI. Besides that the Importance of the Subject wou'd oblige all Men to inquire more narrowly into the one than the other: For what Consequence is it to me, or to the World, whether there was such a Man as *Cesar*, whether he beat or was beaten at *Pharsalia*, whether *Homer* or *Virgil* wrote such Books, and whether what is related in the *Iliads* or *Aeneids* be *True*, or *False*? It is not Two Pence up or down to any Man in the World. And therefore it is worth no Man's while to inquire into it, either to *Oppose* or *Justify* the *Truth* of these Relations.

But our very *Soul* and *Bodies*, both this *Life* and *Eternity* are concern'd in the *Truth* of what is related in the *Holy Scriptures*; and therefore Men wou'd be more inquisitive to search into the *Truth* of these, than of any other Matters of *Fact*; examine and sift them narrowly; and find out the *Deceit*, if any such cou'd be found: For it concern'd them *Nearly*; and was of the last *Importance* to them.

How unreasonable then is it to reject these *Matters of Fact*, so sifted, so examin'd, and so attested as no other *Matters of Fact* in the World ever were; and yet to think it the most highly *Unreasonable*, even to *Madness*, to deny other *Matters of Fact*, which have

not

not the thousandth Part of their *Evidence*, and are of no *Consequence* at all to Us whether *True* or *False*.

VII. There are several other *Topicks*, from whence the Truth of the *Christian* Religion is evinced to all who will Judge by *Reason*, and give themselves leave to *Consider*. As the *Improbability* that Ten or Twelve poor *illiterate Fishermen* should form a Design of converting the whole World to believe the *Delusions*; and the *Impossibility* of their effecting it, without Force of *Arms*, *Learning*, *Oratory*, or any one visible Thing that could recommend them! And to impose a *Doctrine* quite opposite to the *Lusts* and *Pleasures* of Men, and all *worldly Advantages*, or *Enjoyments*! And this in an Age of so great *Learning*, and *Sagacity* as that wherein the *Gospel* was first Preach'd! That these *Apostles* should not only undergo all the *Scorn* and *Contempt*, but the severest *Persecutions*, and most cruel *Deaths* that could be inflicted, in Attestation to what themselves knew to be a meer *Deceit* and *Forgery* of their own Contriving! Some have suffer'd for *Errors* which they thought to be *Truth*: But never any for what themselves *knew* to be *Lies*. And the *Apostles* must know what they taught to be *Lies*, if it was so, because they spoke of those things which they said, they had both *seen* and *heard*, had *looked upon*, and handled with their *Hands*, &c.

Act. iv. 20.

1 Joh. i. 1.

Neither

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Neither can it be said, that they, perhaps, might have propos'd some temporal Advantages to themselves, but miss'd of them, and met with *Sufferings* instead of them: For, if it had been so, it is more than probable, that when they saw their Disappointment, they would have discover'd their *Conspiracy*; especially when they might not have only sav'd their *Lives*, but got great *Rewards* for doing of it. That not one of them should ever have been brought to do this.

But this is not all. For they tell us that their *Master* bid them expect nothing but *Sufferings* in this World. This is the Tenure of all that *Gospel* which they taught. And they told the same to all whom they *Converted*. So that here was no Disappointment.

For all that were *Converted* by them, were *Converted* upon the certain Expectation of *Sufferings*, and bidden *prepare* for it. *Christ* commanded his *Disciples* to take up their *Cross* daily and follow Him; and told them, that in the World they should have *Tribulation*: That whoever did not forsake *Father*, *Mother*, *Wife*, *Children*, *Lands*, and their very *Lives*, could not be his *Disciples*: That he who *sought to save his Life* in this World, should *lose* it in the next.

Now that this despised *Doctrine* of the *Cross* should prevail so *Universally* against the *Allurements* of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and all the *Blandishments* of this World; against the *Rage*, and *Persecution* of all the *Kings* and *Powers*

Powers of the Earth, must shew it's *Original* to be *Divine*; and its *Protector Almighty*. What is it else, could *conquer* without *Arms*, persuade without *Rhetorick*; overcome *Enemies*; disarm *Tyrants*; and subdue *Empires* without *Opposition*!

VIII. We may add to all this, the Testimonies of the most bitter *Enemies* and *Persecutors* of *Christianity*, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to the *Truth* of the *Matter of Fact* of *Christ*, such as *Josephus* and *Tacitus*; of which the First flourish'd about *Forty* Years after the Death of *Christ*, and the Other about *Seventy* Years after: So that they were capable of examining into the *Truth*, and wanted not *Prejudice* and *Malice* sufficient to have inclin'd them to deny the *Matter of Fact* it self of *Christ*: But their Confessing to it, as likewise *Lucian*, *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, and *Julian* the *Apostate*; the *Mahometans* since, and all other *Enemies* of *Christianity* that have arisen in the World, is an undeniable Attestation to the *Truth* of the *Matter of Fact*.

IX. But there is another Argument more strong and convincing than even this *Matter of Fact*. More than the Certainty of what I see with my *Eyes*. And which the Apostle *Peter* call'd a *more sure Word*, that is, *Proof* that what he saw and heard upon the *Holy Mount*, when our *Blessed Saviour* was *Transfigur'd* before him and two other of the *Apostles*:

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Apostles: For having repeated that Passage as a Proof of that whereof they were *Eye-Witnesses*, and heard the *Voice* from *Heaven* giving Attestation to our Lord *Christ*, 2 Pet. i. 16, 17, 18. He says, ver. 19. *We have also a more sure Word of Prophecy*, for the Proof of this *Jesus* being the *Messiah*, that is the *Prophecies* which had gone before of *Him*, from the Beginning of the World; and *All* exactly fulfilled in *Him*.

Men may dispute an *Imposition*, or *Delusion* upon our outward *Senses*. But how can that be *False*, which has been so long, even from the Beginning of the World, and so Often by all the *Prophets*, in several Ages foretold; how can this be an *Imposition*, or a *Forgery*?

This is particularly insisted on, in the *Method with the Jews*. And even the *Deists* must confess, that that Book We call the *Old Testament*, was in being, in the Hands of the *Jews* long before our *Saviour* came into the World. And if they will be at the Pains to compare the *Prophecies* that are there of the *Messiah*, with the Fulfilling of them, as to *Time*, *Place*, and all other *Circumstances*, in the *Person*, *Birth*, *Life*, *Death*, *Resurrection*, and *Ascension* of our Blessed *Saviour*, will find this Proof what our *Apostle* here calls it, a *Light shining in a dark Place*, until the *Day dawn*, and the *Day-star arise in your Hearts*. Which God grant. Here is no possibility of *Deceit* or *Imposture*.

Old

Old *Prophecies*, (and all so agreeing) cou'd not have been contrived to countenance a new *Cheat*: And nothing cou'd be a *Cheat*, that cou'd fulfill all these.

For this therefore I refer the *Deists* to the *Method with the Jews*.

I desire them likewise to look there, *Seet. XI.* and consider the *Prophecies* given so long ago, of which they see the Fulfilling at this Day, with their own Eyes, of the State of the *Jews*, for many Ages *past*, and at *present*; without a *King* or *Priest*, or *Temple*, or *Sacrifice*, scattered to the four *Winds*, *Sifted* as with a *Sieve*, among all *Nations*; yet *preserved*, and always so to be, a distinct People from all others of the whole Earth. Whereas those Mighty *Monarchies* which Oppressed the *Jews*, and which Commanded the *World*, in their Turns; and had the greatest Human Prospect of Perpetuity, were to be extinguished, as they have been, even that their Names should be blotted out from under Heaven.

As likewise, That as Remarkable of our *Blessed Saviour*, concerning the *Preservation* and *Progress* of the *Christian Church*, when in her *Swaddling Cloaths*, consisting only of a few poor *Fishermen*. Not by the *Sword*, as that of *Mahomet*, but under all the *Persecution* of *Men* and *Hell*; which yet should not prevail against Her.

But though I offer these, as not to be slighted by the *Deists*, to which they can

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shew nothing equal in all prophane History; and in which it is impossible any *Cheat* can lie; yet I put them not upon the same Foot as the *Prophecies* before-mentioned of the *Marks* and *Coming* of the *Messiah*, which have been since the *World* began.

And that General Expectation of the whole Earth, at the Time of His Coming, insisted upon in the *Method* with the *Jews*, Sect. V. is Greatly to be Notic'd.

But, I say, the foregoing *Prophecies* of our *Saviour*, are so strong a *Proof*, as even *Miracles* would not be sufficient to break their Authority.

I mean, if it were possible that a *True Miracle* could be wrought, in *contradiction* to them. For that would be for *God* to *contradict* Himself.

But no *Sign*, or *Wonder*, that could possibly be solv'd, should shake this *Evidence*.

It is this that keeps the *Jews* in their Obstinacy. Though they cannot deny the *Matters of Fact* done by our *Blessed Saviour*, to be truly *Miracles*, if so done as said. Nor can they deny that they were so done, because they have all the *Four Marks* before mentioned. Yet they cannot yield! Why? Because they think that the *Gospel* is in *contradiction* to the *Law*. Which, if it were, the Consequence would be unavoidable, that *Both* cou'd not be *True*. To solve this, is the Business of the *Method* with the *Jews*. But the *Contradiction* which they suppose, is in their *Comments* that they put upon the *Law*; especially they expect a *Literal* Fulfilling

filling of those *Promises* of the *Restoration* of *Jerusalem*, and outward *Glories* of the *Church*, of which there is such frequent mention in the *Books* of *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and all the *Prophets*. And many *Christians* do expect the same; and take those *Texts* as *Literally* as the *Jews* do. We do *Believe* and *Pray* for the *Conversion* of the *Jews*. For this End they have been so miraculously *Preserv'd*, according to the *Prophecies* so long before of it. And when that Time shall come, as they are the most *Honourable* and *Ancient* of all the *Nations* on the *Earth*, so will their *Church* Return to be the *Mother* *Christian Church* as she was at First; And *Rome* must *Surrender* to *Jerusalem*. Then all *Nations* will Flow thither; and even *Ezekiel's Temple* may be *Literally* Built There, in the *Metropolis* of the whole *Earth*; which *Jerusalem* must be, when the *Fulness* of the *Gentiles*, shall meet with the *Conversion* of the *Jews*. For no *Nation* will then contend with the *Jews*, nor *Church* with *Jerusalem* for *Supremacy*. All *Nations* will be ambitious to draw their *Original* from the *Jews*, whose are the *Fathers*, and from whom, as concerning the *Flesh*, *Christ* came.

Then will be fulfill'd that outward *Grandeur* and *Restoration* of the *Jews* and of *Jerusalem*, which they expect, pursuant to the *Prophecies*.

They pretend not that this is limited to any particular *Time* of the *Reign* of the *Messiah*.

fiab. They are sure it will not be at the beginning; for they expect to go thro' great *Conflicts* and *Tryals* with their *Messiah*, (as the *Christian Church* has done) before his *Final Conquest*, and that they come to *Reign* with him. So that this is no *Obstruction* to their *Embracing of Christianity*. They see the same things fulfill'd in us, which they expect *Themselves*; and we expect the same things they do.

I tell this to the *Deists*, lest they may think that the *Jews* have some stronger *Arguments* than they know of; That they are not persuaded by the *Miracles* of our *Blessed Saviour*, and by the fulfilling of all the *Prophecies* in him, that were made concerning the *Messiah*.

As I said before, I wou'd not plead even *Miracles* against these.

And if this is sufficient to persuade a *Jew*, it is much more so to a *Deist*, who labours not under these *Objections*.

Besides, I wou'd not seem to clash with that (in a sound Sense) reasonable *Caution*, us'd by *Christian Writers*, not to put the Issue of the *Truth* wholly upon *Miracles*, without this addition, when not done in *Contradiction* to the *Revelations* already given in the *Holy Scriptures*.

And they do it upon this Consideration, That tho' it is impossible to suppose, that *God* wou'd work a real *Miracle*, in contradiction to what he has already *Reveal'd*: yet,

Men

Men may be impos'd upon by *False* and *Seeming Miracles*, and *Pretended Revelations*, (as there are many Examples, especially in the *Church of Rome*) and so may be shaken in the *Faith*, if they keep not to the *Holy Scriptures* as their *Rule*.

We are told, 2 *Theff.* xi. 9. of him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all *Power*, and *Signs*, and *Lying-wonders*. And *Rev.* xiii. 14. xvi. 14. and xix. 20. of the *Devil* and *False-Prophets* working *Miracles*. But the Word, in all these Places, is only *Σημεῖα Signs*, that is, as it is render'd, *Matth.* xxv. 24. which, tho' sometimes it may be us'd to signify *Real Miracles*, yet not always, not in these Places. For though every *Miracle* be a *Sign* and a *Wonder*, yet every *Sign*, or *Wonder*, is not a *Miracle*.

X. Here it may be proper to consider a common *Topick* of the *Deists*, who when they are not able to stand out against the Evidence of *Fact*, that such and such *Miracles* have been done: then turn about, and deny such Things to be *Miracles*, at least, That we can never be *Sure* whether any *wonderful* Thing that is shewn to us, be a *True* or a *False Miracle*.

And the Great Argument they go upon, is this, That a *Miracle* being that which exceeds the *Power of Nature*. We cannot know what *exceeds* it, unless we knew the utmost *Extent* of the *Power of Nature*: And

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no Man pretends to know that; therefore, that no Man can *certainly* know whether any *Event* be *miraculous*. And, consequently, he may be *cheated* in his Judgment betwixt *True* and *False-Miracles*.

To which I answer, That Men may be so *Cheated*. And there are many Examples of it.

But that though we may not always *Know* when we are *Cheated*, yet we can *Certainly* tell, in many Cases, when we are *not Cheated*.

For though we do not know the utmost *Extent* of the *Power* of *Nature*, perhaps, in any *One* Thing: Yet it does not follow, that we know not the *Nature* of any thing, in some *measure*; and that certainly too. For Example, though I do not know the utmost *Extent* of the *Power* of *Fire*, yet I *Certainly* know, That it is the *Nature* of *Fire* to *burn*. And that when proper *Fewel* is administered to it, it is *Contrary* to the *Nature* of *Fire* not to *Consume* it. Therefore, if I see *Three* Men taken off the Street, in their common wearing Apparel, and without any *Preparation*, cast into the midst of a *Burning Fiery Furnace*; and that the *Flame* was so *Fierce*, that it *Burnt* up those Men that threw them in; and yet that these who were thrown in, should walk up and down in the *Bottom* of the *Furnace*, and I shou'd see a *Fourth* Person with them of *Glorious* Appearance, like the Son of *God*. And that these Men shou'd come up again out of the *Furnace*, without any harm, or so much as the
Smell

Smell of *Fire* upon themselves, or their *Cloaths*, I cou'd not be deceiv'd in thinking there was a Stop put to the *Nature* of *Fire*, as to these Men; and that it had its Effect upon the Men whom it *Burned*, at the same Time.

Again, Tho' I cannot tell how *Wonderful* and *Sudden* an *Increase* of *Corn* might be produc'd by the Concurrence of many *Causes*, as a *Warm Climate*, the *Fertility* of the *Soil*, &c. Yet this I can *Certainly* know, That there is not that *Natural* Force in the *Breach* of two or three *Words*, spoken to *multiply* one small *Loaf* of *Bread*, so *fast*, in the *Breaking* of it, as *Truly* and *Really*, not only in *Appearance* and *Shew* to the *Eye*, but to fill the *Bellies* of several *Thousand* hungry *Persons*; and that the *Fragments* shou'd be much more than the *Bread* was at first.

So neither in a *Word* spoken, to raise the *Dead*, cure *Diseases*, &c.

Therefore, though we know not the utmost *Extent* of the *Power* of *Nature*; yet we can certainly know what is *Contrary* to the *Nature* of several such Things as we do Know.

And therefore, though we may be *Cheated* and impos'd upon in many *Seeming-Miracles* and *Wonders*; yet there are some Things, wherein we may be *Certain*.

But further, the *Deists* acknowledge a *God*, of an *Almighty Power*, who made all Things.

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Yet they wou'd put it out of his *Power*, to make any Revelation of his Will to Mankind. For if we cannot be *Certain* of any *Miracle*, How shou'd we know when *God* sent any thing *Extraordinary* to us?

Nay, How shou'd we know the *Ordinary* Power of *Nature*, if we knew not what *exceeded* it? If we knew not what is *Natural*, How do we know there is such a thing as *Nature*; That all is not *Supernatural*, all *Miracles*, and so *disputable*, till we come to downright *Scepticism*, and doubt the *Certainty* of our *outward Senses*, whether we *See*, *Hear*, or *Feel*; or all be not a *miraculous Illusion*!

Which, because I know the *Deists* are not inclin'd to do, therefore I will return to pursue my Argument upon the *Conviction* of our *outward Senses*. Desiring only this, That they wou'd allow the *Senses* of other Men to be as *Certain* as their own. Which they cannot refuse, since without this, they can have no *Certainty* of their own.

XI. Therefore, from what has been said, the Cause is summ'd up shortly in this, That tho' we cannot *See* what was done before our Time, yet by the *Marks* which I have laid down concerning the *Certainty* of *Matters of Fact* done before our Time, we may be as much assur'd of the *Truth* of 'em, as if we saw them with our Eyes; because whatever *Matter of Fact* has all the Four *Marks* before-mention'd, cou'd never have been *Invented*

vented and Received but upon the Conviction of the *outward Senses* of all those who did *Receive* it, as before is demonstrated. And therefore this *Topick* which I have chosen, does stand upon the *Conviction* even of Mens *outward Senses*. And since you have confin'd me to *one* Topick, I have not insisted upon the other, which I have only nam'd.

XII. And now it lies upon the *Deists*, if they wou'd appear as Men of *Reason*, to shew some *Matter of Fact* of former Ages, which they allow to be *True*, that has greater *Evidence* of its *Truth*, than the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ*: Otherwise they cannot, with any shew of *Reason*, reject the one, and yet admit of the other.

But, I have given them greater Latitude than this, for I have shewn such *Marks* of the *Truth* of the *Matters of Fact* of *Moses* and of *Christ*, as no other *Matters of Fact* of those Times, however *True*, have, but these only: And I put it upon them to shew any *Forgery* that has *All* these *Marks*.

This is a short *Issue*. Keep them close to this. This determines the *Cause* all at once.

Let them produce their *Apollonius Tyanæus*, whose Life was put into *English* by the execrable * *Charles Blount*, and compar'd with all the

* The Hand of that Scornor, which durst write such outrageous Blasphemy against his Maker, the Divine Vengeance has made his own Executioner. Which I wou'd not have mentioned (because the like Judgment has befall'n others) but that the Theistical-

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the *Wit* and *Malice* he was Master of, to the *Life* and *Miracles* of our Blessed Saviour.

Let them take Aid from all the *Legends* in the Church of *Rome*, those *Pious Cheats*, the forest *Disgraces* of *Christianity*; and which have bid the fairest, of any one Contrivance, to overturn the *Certainty* of the *Miracles* of *Christ*, and his *Apostles*, and whole *Truth* of the *Gospel*, by putting them all upon the same *Foot*; at least, they are so understood by the generality of their *Devotees*, tho' *Disown'd* and *Laugh'd at* by the *Learned*, and Men of *Sense* among them.

Let them Pick and Chuse the most probable of all the *Fables* of the *Heathen Deities*, and see if they can find in any of these, the Four *Marks* before-mention'd.

Otherwise let them submit to the Irrefragable *Certainty* of the *Christian* Religion.

III. But if, notwithstanding of all that is said, the *Deists* will still contend, That all this is but *Priest-Craft*, the Invention of *Priests*, for their own Profit, &c. then they will give us an *Idea* of *Priests*, far different from

Theistical-Club, have set this up as a Principle; and printed a Vindication of this same Blount, for murdering of himself, by way of Justification of Self-murder. Which some of them have since, as well as formerly, horridly practis'd upon themselves. Therefore this is no common Judgment to which they are deliver'd, but a visible Mark set upon them, to shew how far God has forsaken them; and as a Caution to all Christians, to beware of them, and not to come near the Tents of these wicked Men, lest they perish in their Destruction, both of Soul and Body.

from what they intend: For then we must look upon these *Priests*, not only as the *Cunningest* and *Wiseſt* of *Mankind*, but we ſhall be tempted to adore them as *Deities*, who have ſuch Power, as to impoſe, at their Pleaſure, upon the Senſes of *Mankind* to make them believe, that they had practis'd ſuch *Publick Inſtitutions*, Enacted them by *Laws*, Taught them to their *Children*, &c. when they had never done any of theſe Things, or ever ſo much as heard of them before: And then, upon the Credit of their Believing that they had done ſuch Things as they never did, to make them further Believe, upon the ſame Foundation, whatever they pleas'd to impoſe upon them, as to Former Ages: I ſay, ſuch a *Power* as this, muſt exceed all that is *Human*; and, conſequently, make us rank theſe *Priests* far above the Condition of *Mortals*.

2. Nay, this were to make them out-do all that has ever been related of the *Infernal Powers*: For though their *Legerdemain* has extended to deceive ſome unwary Beholders; and their Power of working ſome *ſeeming* Miracles has been great, yet it never reach'd, nor ever was ſuppos'd to reach ſo far, as to deceive the Senſes of all *Mankind*, in Matters of ſuch *Publick* and *Notorious* Nature as thoſe of which we now ſpeak, to make them believe, that they had enacted *Laws* for ſuch *Publick Obſervances*, continually Practis'd them, Taught them to their *Children*, and had been Inſtructed in them
 themſelves,

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themselves, from their *Childhood*, if they had never *Enacted, Practis'd, Taught, or been Taught* such Things.

3. And as this exceeds all the *Power of Hell and Devils*, so is it more than ever *God Almighty* has done since the Foundation of the World. None of the *Miracles* that He has shewn, or *Belief* which He has requir'd to any thing that he has *Reveal'd*, has ever contradicted the *outward Senses* of any one Man in the World, much less of all *Mankind* together. For *Miracles* being Appeals to our *outward Senses*, if they should overthrow the *Certainty* of our *outward Senses*, must destroy, with it, all their own *Certainty*, as to us; since we have no other way to judge of a Miracle exhibited to our *Senses*, than upon the Supposition of the *Certainty* of our *Senses*, upon which we give credit to a *Miracle*, that is shewn to our *Senses*.

4. This, by the way, is a yet unanswer'd Argument against the *Miracle of Transubstantiation*, and shews the Weakness of the Defence which the *Church of Rome* offers for it, (from whom the *Socinians* have lick'd it up, and, of late, have Glory'd much in it amongst us) That the Doctrines of the *Trinity*, or *Incarnation*, contain as great seeming Absurdities as that of *Transubstantiation*: For I wou'd ask, Which of our *Senses* it is which the Doctrines of the *Trinity* or *Incarnation* do contradict? Is it our *Seeing, Hearing, Feeling, Taste, or Smell*? whereas *Transubstantiation*

tion does contradict all of these. Therefore the *Comparison* is exceedingly *short*, and out of purpose. But to Return.

If the *Christian* Religion be a *Cheat*, and nothing else but the *Invention* of *Priests*; and carry'd on by their *Craft*, it makes their *Power* and *Wisdom* greater, than that of *Men*, *Angels*, or *Devils*; and more than God Himself ever yet shew'd or express'd, to *Deceive* and *Impose* upon the *Senses* of *Mankind*, in such *Publick* and *Notorious* *Matters of Fact*.

XIV. And this *Miracle*, which the *Deists* must run into to avoid these recorded of *Moses* and *Christ*, is much greater, and more astonishing than all the *Scriptures* tell of *Them*.

So that these Men, who laugh at all *Miracles*, are now oblig'd to account for the greatest of all, how the *Senses* of *Mankind* cou'd be impos'd upon in such *publick* *Matters of Fact*.

And how then can they make the *Priests* the most *contemptible* of all *Mankind*, since they make *Them* the sole *Authors* of this the *greatest* of *Miracles*.

XV. And since the *Deists* (these Men of *Sense* and *Reason*) have so *vile* and *mean* an *Idea* of the *Priests* of all *Religions*, why do they not recover the World out of the *Possession* and *Government* of such *Blockheads*? Why do they suffer *Kings* and *States* to be led by *Them*; to establish their *Deceits* by *Laws*,

Laws, and inflict *Penalties* upon the *Opposers* of them? Let the *Deists* try their Hands; they have been trying, and are now busie about it. And free *Liberty* they have. Yet have they not prevail'd, nor ever yet did prevail in any *Civiliz'd* or *Generous* Nation. And tho' they have some *Inrodes* among the *Hotentots*, and some other the most *Brutal* Part of *Mankind*, yet are they still exploded, and *Priests* have and do prevail against them, among not only the *Greatest*, but *Best* Part of the World, and the most *Glorious* for *Arts*, *Learning*, and *War*.

XVI. For as the *Devil* does ape *God*, in His *Institutions* of *Religion*; His *Feasts*, *Sacrifices*, &c. so likewise in His *Priests*, without whom, no *Religion*, whether *True* or *False*, can stand. *False* Religion is but a Corruption of the *True*. The *True* was before it; though it be follow'd close upon the Heels.

The *Revelation* made to *Moses*, is elder than any *History* extant in the Heathen World. The *Heathens*, in Imitation of him, pretended, likewise, to their *Revelations*: But I have given those *Marks* which distinguish them from the *True*: None of them have those *Four* Marks before-mention'd.

Now the *Deists* think all *Revelations* to be equally *Pretended*, and a *Cheat*: and the *Priests* of all *Religions* to be the same *Contrivers* and *Jugglers*; and therefore they proclaim

claim War equally against all, and are equally engag'd to bear the Brunt of all.

And if the Contest be only betwixt the *Deists* and the *Priests*, which of them are the Men of the greatest *Parts* and *Sense*, let the *Effects* determine it; and let the *Deists* yield the *Victory* to their *Conquerors*, who by their own Confession, carry all the World before them.

XVII. If the *Deists* say, That this is because all the World are *Blockheads*, as well as those *Priests* who govern them; that all are *Blockheads*, except the *Deists*, who vote themselves only to be *Men of Sense*. This, (besides the Modesty of it) will spoil their great and beloved *Topick*, in behalf of what they call *Natural Religion*, against the *Reveal'd*, viz, appealing to the *Common Reason* of *Mankind*: This they set up against *Revelation*; think this to be sufficient for all the uses of Men, here or hereafter, (if there be any after State) and therefore that there is no use of *Revelation*: This *Common Reason* they advance as *Infallible*, at least, as the *surest* Guide, yet now cry out upon it, when it turns against them; when this *Common Reason* runs after *Revelation*, (as it always has done) then *Common Reason* is a *Beast*, and we must look for *Reason*, not from the *Common Sentiments* of *Mankind*, but only among the *Beaux*, the *Deists*.

XVIII. Therefore, if the *Deists* would avoid the *Mortification*, (which will be very uneasy to them) to *yield* and *submit* to be *Subdu'd* and *Hew'd* down before the *Priests*, whom of all Mankind, they *Hate* and *Despise*; if they would avoid this, let them confess, as the Truth is, That *Religion* is no Invention of *Priests*, but of *Divine* Original: That *Priests* were Instituted by the same *Author* of *Religion*; and that their *Order* is a *Perpetual* and *Living Monument* of the *Matters of Fact* of their *Religion*, Instituted from the *Time* that such *Matters of Fact* were said to be done as the *Levites* from *Moses*; the *Apostles*, and succeeding *Clergy*, from *Christ*, to this Day. That no *Heathen Priests* can say the same: They were not appointed by the *Gods* whom they served, but by others in after Ages: They cannot stand the *Test* of the *Four Rules* before-mentioned, which the *Christian Priests* can do, and they *only*. Now the *Christian Priesthood*, as Instituted by *Christ* Himself, and continu'd by *Succession* to this Day, being as *Impregnable* and *Flagrant* a *Testimony* to the Truth of the *Matters of Fact* of *Christ*, as the *Sacraments*, or any other Publick *Institutions*: Besides that, if the *Priesthood* were taken away, the *Sacraments*, and other Publick *Institutions*, which are administred by their Hands, must fall with them: Therefore the *Devil* has been most

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busie, and bent his greatest Force, in all Ages, against the *Priesthood*, knowing, that if *That* goes down, *All* goes with it.

XIX. With the *Deists*, in this Cause, are join'd the *Quakers*, and other of our *Dissenters*, who throw off the *Succession* of our *Priesthood*, (by which only it can be demonstrated) together with the *Sacraments* and *publick Festivals*. And if the *Devil* could have prevail'd to have these dropt, the *Christian Religion* would lose the most *Undeniable* and *Demonstrative* Proof for the Truth of the *Matter of Fact* of our *Saviour*, upon which the Truth of his *Doctrine* does depend. Therefore we may see the *Artifice* and *Malice* of the *Devil*, in all these Attempts. And let those wretched *Instruments* whom he *ignorantly*, (and some, by a misguided *Zeal*) has deluded thus to undermine *Christianity*, now at last look back and see the *Snare* in which they have been taken: For if they had prevail'd, or ever shou'd, *Christianity* dies with them. At least, it will be render'd *precarious*, as a thing of which no *Certain* Proof can be given. Therefore let those of them, who have any *Zeal* for the Truth, bless God that they have not prevail'd; and quickly leave them; and let all others be aware of them.

And let us Consider and Honour the *Priesthood*, *Sacraments*, and other *Publick Institutions* of *Christ*, not only as *Means* of *Grace*,

and

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and *Helps to Devotion*, but as the Great *Evidence* of the *Christian Religion*.

Such *Evidences* as no *pretended Revelation* ever had, or can have. Such as do plainly distinguish it from all foolish *Legends* and *Impostures* whatsoever.

XX. And now, last of all, if one Word of Advice would not be lost, upon Men who think so unmeasurably of themselves, as the *Deists*, you may represent to them, what a Condition they are in, who spend that *Life* and *Sense*, which God has given them, in Ridiculing the Greatest of His *Blessings*, His *Revelations* of *Christ*, and by *Christ*, to Redeem those from *Eternal Misery*, who shall *Believe* in Him, and *Obeys* His *Laws*. And that God, in His Wonderful *Mercy* and *Wisdom*, has so Guarded His *Revelations*, as that it is past the Power of *Men* or *Devils* to *Counterfeit*: And that there is no *Denying* of them, unless we will be so absurd, as to deny not only the *Reason*, but the *Certainty* of the *outward Senses*, not only of *One*, or *Two*, or *Three*, but of *Mankind* in General. That this Case is so very Plain, that nothing but want of *Thought* can hinder any to discover it. That they must yield it to be so Plain, unless they can shew some *Forgery*, which has all the *Four Marks*, before set down. But if they cannot do this, they must quit their Cause, and yield a Happy *Victory* over themselves: Or else sit down under all
that

that *Ignominy*, with which they have loaded the *Priests*, of being, not only the most *Per-nicious*, but (what will *gall* them more) the most *Inconsiderate*, and *Inconsiderable* of *Man-kind*.

Therefore, let them not think it an Undervaluing of their *Worthiness*, that their whole Cause is comprised within so narrow a Compass: And no more Time bestow'd upon it than it is worth.

But let them, rather, reflect, how far they have been all this Time from *Christianity*; whose *Rudiments* they are yet to learn! How far from the Way of *Salvation*! How far the Race of their Lives is run, before they have set one Step in the Road to Heaven. And therefore, how much Diligence they ought to use, to redeem all that Time they have lost, lest they lose themselves for ever; and be convinc'd, by a dreadful Experience, when it is too late, That the *Gospel* is a Truth, and of the last Consequence.





A LETTER *from the* AUTHOR
of the Short Method with
the Deists and Jews.

SIR, I have read over your Papers with great Satisfaction, and I heartily bless God with *you*, and for *you*, that He has had Mercy upon *you*, and open'd *your Eyes*, to see the wondrous Things of his Law, to convince *you* of those irrefragable Proofs He has afforded for the *Truth* and *Authority* of the *Holy Scriptures*, such as no other *Writing* upon Earth can pretend to, and which are incompatible with any *Forgery* or *Deceit*. He has given *you* likewise that *True Spirit of Repentance* to bring forth the Fruits thereof, that is, to make what *Satisfaction* you can for the Injuries you have done to *Religion*, by answering what has been publish'd formerly by *your self* against it, and being converted, *you* endeavour to *Strengthen* your *Brethren*,

I. *Creation.*

You have laid the true Foundation of the *Being of God*, against the *Atheist*: Of His
Creation

Creation of the World, and Providence, against the Asserters of blind Chance. If all be Chance, then their Thoughts are so too, and there's no Reasoning or Argument in the World.

Others, because they know not what to say, suppose the World, and all Things in it, to have been from *Eternity*, and to have gone on, as now, in a constant *Succession*, of Men begetting Men, Trees springing from Trees, &c. without any *Beginning*.

But if it was always as it is now, then every Thing had a *Beginning*, every Man, Bird, Beast, Tree, &c. And what has a *Beginning*, cannot be without a *Beginning*.

Therefore as it is evident, that nothing can make itself, it is equally evident, that a *Succession* of Things made, must have a *Beginning*. A *Succession* of *Beginnings* cannot be without a *Beginning*; for that wou'd be literally a *Beginning* without a *Beginning*, which is a *Contradiction in Terms*.

II. Providence.

And to deny *Providence* in the *first Cause*, is the denying of a God: Whence had we our *Providence*: For we find we have a *Providence* to forecast and contrive how to preserve and govern that which we make or acquire: Therefore there must be a *Providence* much more *eminently* in God, to preserve and govern all the *Works* which He has made. He that made the *Eye*, does he not see? And

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He who put *Providence* into the Heart of *Man*, has He none Himself.

And the Glory of his *Wisdom* and *Power* seems greater to us, in the *Acts* of His *Providence*, than even in those of *Creation*, especially in His *Governing* the *Actions* of *Free-Agents*, without taking from them the *Freedom* of their *Will* to *do* as they *list*, and turning their very *Evil* into *Good*, by the *Almightiness* of His *Wisdom*. We see great Part of this every *Day* before our Eyes, in His turning the *Counsels* of the *Wise* into *Foolishness*, and trapping the *Wicked* in the Works of *their own* Hands. This strikes us more sensibly, and is nearer to us than the making of a *Tree* or a *Star*; and we *feel* that overruling *Power* in His *Providence*, which we *contemplate* in His *Creation*.

When the *Sins* of *Men* are increas'd to provoke *God* to take *Vengeance*, He permits the *Spirit* of *Fury* to incline their *Wills* to *War*, and Destruction of each other, and *Nation* rise up against *Nation*; and when in his *Mercy* he thinks the *Punishment* is sufficient, he *calms* their *Rage*, like the *Roaring* of the *Sea*, and there is *Peace*. And they are so *Free-Agents* in all this, that they think it is all their own doing; and so really it is, tho' under the unseen *Direction* of a Superior *Power*.

But not only in the *Publick* Transactions of the World, His *Providence* is observable; there is no Man, who has taken Notice of
his

his own Life, but must find it as to his very *private* Affairs, a *Thought* sometimes *darting* into his *Mind*, to rid him out of a *Difficulty*, or shew him an *Advantage*, which he cou'd not find in much *considering* before. At other Times a Man's *Mind* is so *clouded*, as if his *Eyes* were shut, that he cannot, *see his Way*: Again, several *Events* which he thought most *Funest*, and his utter *Ruin*, he finds afterwards to be much for the *best*, and that he had been *undone*, if that had not happen'd which he *fear'd*. On the other Hand, many Things which he thought for his great *Benefit*, he has found to be for his *Hurt*. This shews a *Providence*, which sees further than we can, and disposes all our *Actions*, tho' done in the full *Freedom* of our own *Will*, to what *Events*, either *Good* or *Bad* for us, as He pleases.

III. Revelation.

But these Considerations from the *Creation* and *Providence*, tho' *Admirable* and *Glorious*, are within the *Oracles* of *Reason*, and are but *Earthly Things*, in Comparison of those *Heavenly Things*, which *God* has reveal'd to Man at *sundry Times*, and in *divers Manners*, and are *recorded* in the *Holy Scriptures*, and which otherwise it was impossible for Man to have known. For what Man is he that can know the Counsel of God? Or who can think what the Will

Wisd. ix. 13,
14, 15, 16.

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of the Lord is? For the Thoughts of mortal Men are miserable, and our Devices are but uncertain; for the corruptible Body presseth down the Soul, and the earthly Tabernacle weigheth down the Mind that museth upon many Things; and hardly do we guess aright at Things that are upon Earth, and with Labour do we find Things that are before us: But the Things that are in Heaven, who hath searched out?

This then must be purely the Subject of *Revelation*; but when the *Deist* is come thus far, he is enter'd into a wide Field; for all Religions, *Jewish, Heathen, Christian, and Mahometan*, pretend to *Revelation* for their *Original*.

To clear this Point, was the Design of the *Short Method with the Deists*, which gave the first Opportunity to our Conversation.

The *Heathens* and *Mahometan* Religions not only want those *Marks* (there set down) which *ascertain* the Truth of *Fact*, but their *Morals* and *Worship* are impure, and inconsistent with the *Attributes of God*; as the Indulgence of *Fornication*, and *Uncleaness* among the *Heathen*, and their *Human Sacrifices*, (most abhorrent to the *God of Holiness and Mercy*) and the filthy *Obscenity* of their very *Sacra*; besides the great Defect of their *Morals*, which knew no such Thing as *Humility*, *Forgiveness of Injuries*, *Loving their Enemies*, and returning *Good for Evil*. Some of their *Philosophers* spoke against revenging
of

of *Injuries*, as bringing greater *Injury* to ourselves, or not worth the *While*; but not upon the Account of *Humanity* and *Love* to our *Brethren*, and doing them *Good*, tho' they did *Evil* to us; and by the Word *Humilitas*, they meant only a *Lowness* and *Dejection* of *Mind*, which is a *Vice*; but they had no Notion of it as a *Virtue*, in having a low Opinion of one's self, and in *Honour* preferring others before us: This they thought a *Vice*, and *Abjection* of *Spirits*. You may see *Pride* and *Self-Conceit* run through all their *Philosophy*, besides their *Principle* of increasing their *Empire*, by *Conquering* other *Countries* who did them no Harm, whom they call'd *Barbarians*.

Into this Class comes likewise the *Sensual PARADISE* propos'd by *Mahomet*, and his *Principle* of propagating his *Religion* by the *Sword*.

The *Jewish* Religion has all the *Certainty* of *Fact*, and its *Morals* are *Good*; but because of the *Hardness* of their *Hearts*, they came not up to the *Primitive Purity*, as in Case of *Polygamy* and *Divorce*, wherein our *Blessed Saviour* reduces them to the *Original*, That from the *Beginning* it was not so; and in several other Cases mention'd in his *Sermon* upon the *Mount*.

Therefore the *Perfection* of *Morals*, and of the true *Knowledge* of *God*, was reserv'd for the *Christian Religion*, which has, in more abundant Manner, than even the *Jewish*, the
infallible

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infallible *Marks* of the *Truth* of the *Facts*, in the *Multitude* and *Notoriety* of the *Miracles* wrought by our *Blessed Saviour*, beyond those of *Moses*. Which fully answers the *Objection* of the *Jews*, that *Christ* wrought his *Miracles* by *Beelzebub*: For then, as he said to them, *By whom do your Children cast out Devils?* Was it by the *Spirit of God*, or *Beelzebub*, that *Moses* and the *Prophets* wrought their *Miracles*?

Then from the *Purity* and *Heavenliness* of his *Doctrine*, all levell'd to destroy the *Kingdom of Satan*, those wicked *PRINCIPLES*, and *Idolatrous WORSHIP* which he had set up in the *World*; the other *Answer* of our *Blessed Saviour* concludes *demonstratively*, of a *Kingdom divided against itself*, That if *Satan* cast out *Satan*, to promote that *Doctrine* which *Christ* taught, we must alter our *Notion* of the *Devil*, and suppose him to be *Good*, and his *Kingdom* must then be at an *End*; which we see not yet done, for *Wickedness* still *Reigns* in the *World*.

IV. Object. *As to the Holy Trinity.*

Against these Things *Reason* has nothing to object, but then *Prejudices* are rais'd up against what is *Reveal'd*, as being of Things that are above our *Reason*, and out of its *Reach*; as chiefly the *Doctrine* of the *Blessed Trinity*.

In

In answer to which, we may consider, that if such Things were not above our *Reason*, there needed no *Revelation* of them, but only a bare *Proposal* of them to our *Reason*, made by any Body, without any *Authority*, and their own *Evidence* wou'd carry them through.

In the next Place, we must acknowledge that there are many Things in the *Divine* Nature far out of the Reach of our *Reason*. That it must be so: For how can *Finite* comprehend *Infinite*? Who can *think* what *Eternity* is? A *Duration* without *Beginning*, or *Succession* of *Parts* or *Time*! Who can so much as *imagine*, or frame any *Idea* of a *Being*, neither made by itself, nor by any other? Of *Omnipresence*? Of a boundless *Immensity*, &c.

Yet all this *Reason* obliges us to allow, as the Necessary Consequences of a *First Cause*

And where any Thing is Establish'd upon the full Proof of *Reason*, there ten thousand *Objections* or *Difficulties*, tho' we cannot *Answer* them, are of no Force at all to overthrow it. Nothing can do that, but to refute those *Reasons* upon which it is *Establish'd*; till when, the *Truth* and *Certainty* of the *thing* remains *Unshaken*, tho' we cannot *Explain* it, nor *solve* the *Difficulties* that arise from it.

And if it is so, upon the Point of *Reason*, much more upon that of *Revelation*, where
the

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the subject *Matter* is above our *Reason*, and cou'd never have been found out by it.

All to be done in that Case, is, to satisfy ourselves of the *Truth* of the *Fact*, that such Things were *Reveal'd* of *God*, and are no *Imposture*. This is done, as to the *Holy Scriptures*, by the *Four Marks* before-mention'd.

And as to the *Contradiction* alledged in *Three* being *One*, it is no *Contradiction*, unless it be said, that *Three* are *One*, in the self-same *Respect*: For in divers *Respects*, there is no Sort of *Difficulty*, that *One* may be *Three*, or *Three Thousand*; as *One Army* may consist of many *Thousands*, and yet it is but *One Army*: There is but *One Human Nature*, and yet there are *Multitudes* of *Persons* who partake of that *Nature*.

Now it is not said, that the three *Persons* in the *Divine Nature* are one *Person*; that would be a *Contradiction*: But it is said, that the three *Persons* are one *Nature*. They are not *Three* and *One*, in the same *Respect*; they are *Three* as to *Persons*, and *One* as to *Nature*. Here is no *Contradiction*.

Again, that may be a *Contradiction* in one *Nature*, which is not so in another: For Example, it is a *Contradiction*, that a *Man* can go two *Yards* or *Miles* as soon as one, because *Two* is but *One* and another *One*: Yet this is no *Contradiction* to *Sight*, which can reach a *Star*, as soon as the *Top* of a *Chimney*; and the *Sun* darts his *Rays* in one *Instant* from *Heaven* to *Earth*: But more than all these

these is the Motion of *Thought*, to which no *Distance* of *Place* is any Interruption; which can arrive at *Japan* as soon as at a *Yard's* Distance; and can run into the *Immensity* of *Possibilities*.

Now there are no *Words* possible, whereby to give any *Notion* or *Idea* of *Sight* or *Light* to a Man born *Blind*: And consequently to reconcile the Progress of *Sight* or *Light* to him from being an absolute *Contradiction*; because he can measure it no otherwise than according to the *Motions* of *Legs* or *Arms*, for he knows none other: Therefore we cannot charge that as a *Contradiction* in one *Nature*, which is so in another, unless we understand both *Natures* perfectly well: And therefore we cannot charge that as a *Contradiction* in the *Incomprehensible* Nature of being *Three* and *One*, tho' we found it to be so in our *Nature*; which we do not, because, as before said, they are not *Three* and *One* in the same *Respect*.

Now, let us consider further, that tho' there is no *Comparison* betwixt *Finite* and *Infinite*, yet, we have nearer *Resemblances* of the *Three* and *One* in *God*, than there is of *Sight* to a Man born *Blind*: For there is nothing in any of the other four *Senses* that has any *Resemblance* at all to that of *Seeing*, or that can give such a Man any *Notion* whatever of it.

But we find in our own *Nature*, which is said to be made after the *Image* of *God*, a
very

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very near *Resemblance* of His Holy Trinity, and of the different *Operations* of each of the *Divine Persons*.

For Example; to *know* a Thing *Present*, and to *Remember* what is *Past*, and to *Love* or *Hate*, are different *Operations* of our *Mind*, and perform'd by different *Faculties* of it. Of these, the *Understanding* is the *Father* Faculty, and gives *Being* to Things, as to Us; for what we *know* not, is to Us as if it *were* not: This answers to *Creation*. From this *Faculty* proceeds the *Second*, that of *Memory*, which is a *Preserving* of what the *Understanding* has *Created* to Us. Then the *Third* Faculty, that of the *Will*, which *Loves* or *Hates*, proceeds from *Both* the *Other*, for we cannot *love* or *hate* what is not first *created* by the *Understanding*, and *preserv'd* to us by the *Memory*.

And tho' these are different *Faculties*, and their *Operations* Different, that the *Second* proceeds from the *First*, or is *Begotten* by it; and the *Third* proceeds from the *First* and *Second* in *Conjunction*, so that one is *before* the other, in *Order of Nature*, yet not in *Time*; for they are all *Con-genial*, and one is as soon in the *Soul* as the other; and yet they make not *Three Souls*, but *One Soul*, And tho' their *Operations* are *Different*, and the one *Proceeds* from the *Other*, yet no *One* can *Act* without the *Other*, and they all *Concur* to every *Act* of *Each*; for in *Understanding* and *Remembering*, there is a *Concurrent Act* of the *Will* to *Consent* to such *Understanding*,

Understanding, or Remembering; so that no One can *Act* without the *Other*; in which Sense, none is *Before* or *After* the other, nor can any of them *Be*, or *Exist* without the other.

But what we call *Faculties* in the *Soul*, we call *Persons* in the *Godhead*; because there are *Personal* Actions attributed to *Each* of them: As that of *Sending*, and being *Sent*, to take *Flesh*, and be *Born*; &c.

And we have no other *Word*, whereby to Express it; we speak it after the Manner of Men; nor could we Understand, if we heard any of those *Un-speakable Words*, which Express the *Divine Nature* in its proper *Essence*; therefore we must make *Allowances*, and *Great* ones, when we apply *Words* of our *Nature*, to the *Infinite* and *Eternal Being*. We must not argue *Strictly* and *Philosophically* from them, more than from *God's* being said to *Repent*, to be *Angry*, &c. They are *Words ad Captum*, in Condescension to our weak *Capacities*, and without which, we could not understand.

But this, I say, That there are nearer *Resemblance* afforded to us of this Ineffable *Mystery* of the *Holy Trinity*, than there is betwixt one of our outward *Senses* and another; than there is to a *blind Man*, of *Colours*, or of the *Motions* of *Light*, or *Sight*: And a *Contradiction* in the one, will not infer a *Contradiction* in the other; tho' it is impossible to be solv'd, as in the Instance before given of a *Man* born *blind*, till we come to *Know* both *Natures* Distinctly. And

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And if we had not the *Experience* of the Different *Faculties* of our *Mind*, the *Contradiction* would appear *Ir-reconcilable* to all our *Philosophy*, how *Three* cou'd be *One*, each *Distinct* from the other, yet but one *Soul*: One *Proceeding* from, or being *Begot* by the Other; and yet all *Co eval*, and none *Before* or *After* the other: And as to the difference betwixt *Faculties* and *Persons*, *Substance* and *Subsistence*, it is a *puzzling* Piece of *Philosophy*. And tho' we give not a *Distinct Subsistence* to a *Faculty* it has an *Existence*, and one *Faculty* can no more be Another, than one *Person* can be Another: So that the Case seems to be alike in Both, as to what concerns our present Difficulty of *Three* and *One*; besides what before is said, That by the Word *Person*, when apply'd to *God* (for want of a *Proper* Word, whereby to express it) we must mean something infinitely different from *Personality* among *Men*. And therefore from a *Contradiction* in the one (suppose it granted) we cannot charge a *Contradiction* in the other, unless we *understand* it as well as the other; for how else can we draw the *Parallel*?

What a Vain Thing is our *Philosophy*, when we wou'd *Measure* the *Incomprehensible Nature* by it! When we find it *Non-pluss'd* in our own *Nature*, and that in many Instances. If I am *All* in one *Room*, is it not a *Contradiction* that any *Part* of *Me* shou'd be in another *Room*? Yet it was a common saying

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Saying among *Philosophers*, that the *Soul* is *All in All*, and *All* in every *Part* of the *Body*: How is the same Individual *Soul* Present, at one and the same *Time*, to *Actuate* the distant *Members* of the *Body*, without either *Multiplication* or *Division* of the *Soul*? Is there any Thing in *Body* can bear any *Resemblance* to this, without a manifest *Contradiction*? Nay, even as to *Bodies*, is any Thing more a Self-Evident *Principle*, than that the *Cause* must be before the *Effect*? Yet the *Light* and *Heat* of the *Sun* are as *old* as the *Sun*; and supposing the *Sun* to be *Eternal*, they wou'd be as *Eternal*.

And as *Light* and *Heat* are of the *Nature* of the *Sun*, and as the *Three Faculties* before-mentioned, are of the *Nature* of the *Soul*, so that the *Soul* cou'd not be a *Soul* if it wanted any of them; so may we, from *small* Things to *Great*, apprehend without any *Contradiction*, that the *Three Persons* are of the very *Nature* and *Essence* of the *Deity*; and so of the same *Substance* with it; and tho' one *Proceeding* from the other, (as the *Faculties* of the *Soul* do) yet that all *Three* are *Con-substantial*, *Co-eternal*, and of necessary Existence as *God* is; for that these *Three* are *God*, and *God* is these *Three*. As *Understanding*, *Memory*, and *Will*, are a *Soul*, and a *Soul* is *Understanding*, *Memory*, and *Will*.

I intend (God willing) to Treat of this Subject more largely by itself; but I have said thus much here, to clear the Way from that *Objection* of rejecting *Revelation*, (tho'

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we are *Infallibly* sure of the *Fact*) because of the suppos'd *Contradiction* to our *Reason*, in comparing it with our *Earthly* Things.

V. *Of the Differences among Christians.*

But now, that from all the Proofs of the *Certainty* of the *Revelation* we are come to fix in *Christianity*, our Labour is not yet at an End: For here you see Multiplicity of *Sects* and *Division*, which our *Blessed Saviour* foretold should come, for the Probation of the *Elect*; as some *Canaanites* were left in the Land to teach the *Israelites* the Use of *War*, lest by too profound a Peace, they might grow *Lazy* and *Stupid*, and become an easie *Prey* to their *Enemies*. So might *Christianity* be lost among us; if we had nothing to do, it wou'd *Dwindle* and *Decay* and *Corrupt* by Degrees, as *Water* stagnates by standing still: But when we are put to *Contend Earnestly*, for the *Faith*, it Quickens our *Zeal*, keeps Us upon our *Guard*, Trims our *Lamp*, and *Furbishes* the *Sword* of the *Spirit*, which might otherwise *Rust* in its *Scabbard*. And it gives great Opportunity to shew Us the Wonderful *Providence* and *Protection* of GOD over his *Church*, in *Preserving* Her against a *visibly* unequal *Force*.

And in this *Contest*, to some this *Phil. i. 29.* High *Privilege* is *Granted* in the *Behalf* of *Christ*, not only to believe on Him, but also to Suffer for His Sake. These go to make

make up the *Noble Army of Martyrs*, and *Confessors*, for ever *Triumphant* in *Heaven*. Others *Conquer* even here on *Earth*, that *God's Wonderful Doings* may be known to the *Children of Men*.

But as he who Builds a *Tower*, ought first to compute the *Expence*, and he who goes to *War*, to consider his *Strength*; so our *Blessed Saviour* has Instructed Us, That he who will be his *Disciple*, must resolve beforehand to take up his *Cross* daily, to *forsake Father and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Lands, and Life itself*, when he cannot keep them with the *Truth and Sincerity* of the *Gospel*. Therefore we must put on the *whole Armour of God*, that we may be able to stand in the evil Day, and having overcome all, to stand; for we wrestle not against *Flesh and Blood*, but against *Principalities, against Powers; against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against wicked Spirits in high Places*.

And what is it we *Wrestle* for? For the *Great Mystery of Godliness, God manifest in the Flesh, &c.*

VI. The Doctrine of Satisfaction.

Here is the *Foundation* of the *Christian Religion*, That when *Man* had *Sinned*, and was utterly unable to make any *Satisfaction* for his *Sin*, *God* sent his own *Son* to take upon Him our *Flesh*, and in the same *Nature* that

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Offended, to make full *Satisfaction* for the *Sins* of the whole World, by His Perfect *Obedience*, and the *Sacrifice* of *Himself* upon the Cross.

Some say, What need any *Satisfaction*? Might not *God* forgive without it? It would shew greater *Mercy*. But these Men consider not, that *God* is not only *Just*, but He is *Justice* itself; *Justice* in the *Abstract*, He is *Essential Justice*. And *Justice*, by its *Nature*, must exact to the utmost *Farthing*, else it were not *Justice*: To *Remit* is *Mercy*, it is not *Justice*: And the *Attributes* of *God* must not *Fight* and *Oppose* each other; they must all stand *Infinite* and *Compleat*. You may say then, how can *God* Forgive at all? How can *Infinite Mercy* and *Justice* stand together?

This Question cou'd never have been Answer'd, if *God* Himself had not shew'd it to Us in the wonderful *O Economy* of our *Redemption*: For here is His *Justice* satisfy'd to the least *Iota*, by the perfect *Obedience* and *Passion* of *Christ*, (who is *God*) in the same *Human Nature* that *Offended*. Here is *Infinite Wisdom* express'd in this *Means* found out for our *Salvation*; and *Infinite Mercy* in Affording it to us. Thus all His *Attributes* are *Satisfy'd*, and *Fill'd* up to the *Brim*: They *Contradict* not, but *Exalt* each other. His *Mercy* Exalts and Magnifies His *Justice*: His *Justice* Exalts his *Mercy*, and both His *Infinite Wisdom*.

Here is a View of *God*, beyond what all the *Oracles* of *Reason* cou'd ever have found out, from His *Works* of *Creation*, or Com-

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mon *Providence*! These shew His *Works*, but this His *Nature*, it is *Himself*! The very Face of *God*! Before which the *Angels* veil their *Faces*, and *Desire* to *Look* into this *Abyss* of *Goodness*, and *Power*, and *Wisdom*, which they will never be able to *Fathom*, but still *Feed* upon, and *Search* farther and farther into it, with *Adoration*, to *Eternity*! And they *Worship* our *Manhood* thus taken into *God*! And *Rejoyce* to be *Ministring Spirits* to *Us*, while upon *Earth*.

This you and I have talk'd over at Large; and this I gave you as the *Sum* and *Substance*, the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the *Christian Religion*. And now I repeat it as the surest *Criterion* to guide a *Man*, in the *Difficulty* before *Us*, that is, in the *Choice* of a *Church*, in the midst of all that *Variety* there is among *Christians*. Whoever hold not this *Doctrine*, join not with them, nor bid them *God Speed*.

VII. The Socinians.

This will save you from the *Socinians*, or the *Unitarians*, as they now call themselves in *England*, who expressly *deny* this *Doctrine*: For they *Deny* the *Doctrine* of the *Holy Trinity*, and the *Divinity* of *Christ*, upon which it is founded. They consider *Christ* no otherwise than a meer *Man*; and propose Him only as a *Teacher* and Good *Example* to *Us*. But then they are confounded with all their Pretence to *Wit* and *Reason*, to give

any Account for His *Death*, which was not necessary to *Teaching*, or being an *Example*: That, an *Angel*, or a *Prophet* might have been. Then they say, That he *Died*, to Confirm the *Truth* of His *Doctrine*: But set this *Doctrine* of *Satisfaction* aside, and He taught nothing New, except the Improvement of some *Morals*: Besides, *Dying* does not Confirm the *Truth* of any *Doctrine*; it only shews, That He who *Dies* for it, does himself *Believe* it. Some have *Dy'd* for *Errors*; and the *Socinian Doctrine* Affords no *Comfort*, no *Assurance* to Us. For if we consider *Christ* only as a *Teacher*, or *Example*, we have not follow'd His *Precepts*, nor *Example*: Here is nothing but Matter of *Condemnation* to Us. But if we look upon Him as our *Surety*, who has paid our *Debt*, as our *Sacrifice*, *Atonement*, and *Propitiation* for our *Sins*, and that we are *Saved* by His *Blood*, (which is the Language of the *Holy Scriptures*, of which the *Socinians* know no Meaning) this is a *Rock* and Infallible *Assurance*.

VIII. *The Church of Rome.*

As the *Socinians* have totally Rejected this *Doctrine*, so the Church of *Rome* has greatly *Vitiated* and *Depress'd* it, by their *Doctrine* of *Merit*, and their own *Satisfaction*, which they make Part of their *Sacrament of Penance*. On this is Founded their *Purgatory*, wherein *Souls* who had not made full *Satisfaction*

tion upon *Earth*, must *Compleat* it there. They deny not the *Satisfaction* of *Christ*, but join their own with it, as if it were not *Sufficient*.

IX. The Dissenters.

On the other Hand, our *Dissenters* run to the contrary *Extream*: And because our *good Works* must have no *Share* in the *Satisfaction* for *Sin*, which they cannot, as being *Unworthy*, and mix'd with our *Infirmities*, and our *Sin*; therefore they make them not *Necessary*, nor of any *Effect* towards our *Salvation*. They say that *Christ* did not *Die* for any but the *Elect*, in whom he sees no *Sin*, let them *Live* never so *Wickedly*. They *Damn* the far greatest Part of the World, by irreversibile *Decrees* of *Reprobation*, and say, That their *Good Works* are hateful to *God*, and that it is not *Possibly* in their *Power* to be *Saved*, let them *Believe* as they will, and *Live* never so *Religiously*, They take away *Free-Will* in *Man*, and make him a perfect *Machine*, They make *God* the *Author* of *Sin*, to Create *Men* on purpose to *Damn* them; and to *Punish* them *Eternally* for not Doing what was not in their *Power* to Do, and for doing what He had made *Impossible* for them not to Do. They make his *Promises* and *Threatnings* to be of no *Effect*, nay, to be a Sort of *Burlisquing*, and *Insulting* those whom He has made *Miserable*; which is an *Hideous Blasphemy*!

For a Solution in this Matter, both as to *Faith* and *Works*, I refer you to the *Homilies* of *Faith*, and *Salvation*, and of *Good Works*, where you will find the *True Christian Doctrine* set forth *clearly* and *solidly*.

I will not anticipate what you Design for your *Second Part*, by entering into other Disputes there are among *Christians*; only this will be exceeding Necessary, to settle well the Notion of the *Church* of *Christ*, to which all do pretend in various Manners.

X. *The true Notion of the Church.*

First therefore, the *Church* must be consider'd not only as a *Sect*, that is, a Company of People *Believing* such and such *Tenets*, like the several *Sects* of the *Heathen Philosophers*; but as a *Society* under *Government*, with *Governours* appointed by *Christ*, invested with such *Powers* and *Authority*, to *Admit* into, and *Exclude* out of the *Society*, and *Govern* the Affairs of the *Body*.

This *Power* was Delegated by *Christ* to His *Apostles*, and their *Successors*, to the End of the World: Accordingly the *Apostles* did Ordain *Bishops* in all the *Churches* which they Planted throughout the whole World, as the Supreme *Governours*, and Center of *Unity*, each in his own *Church*. These were oblig'd to keep *Unity* and *Communion* with one another; which is therefore call'd *Catholick Communion*. And all these *Churches* consider'd
together

together, is the *Catholick Church*: As the several *Nations* of the Earth are call'd the *World*.

XI. Of an Universal Bishop.

And *Christ* Appointed no *Universal Bishop* over His *Church*, more than an *Universal Monarch* over the *World*. No such Thing was known in the *Primitive Church*, till it was set up first by *John* Bishop of *Constantinople*, then by the Bishop of *Rome*, in the *Seventh Century*. And as the whole *World* is *One Kingdom* to *God*, as it is written, *His Kingdom Ruleth over All*, so the several *Churches* of the *World* are *One Church* to *Christ*. And the *Church* of *Rome* saying that She is that *One Church*, or shew Us another, which can Dispute it with Us, in *Universal, Antiquity, &c.* is the same as if *France* (for Example) should say, Who can compare with Me? Therefore I am the *Universality*, or *Monarch*, shew me another. The Thing appears *Ridiculous* at the first Proposal; for it must be said to *Rome*, or to *France*, that if you were ten times greater than you are, you are yet but a *Part* of the *Whole*. And to say, who else pretends to it? Why none. And it wou'd be Nonsense in any who did Pretend to it: One *Part* may be *Bigger* than another; but one *Part* can never be the *Whole*. And all Results in this, whether *Christ* did appoint an *Universal Bishop* over all the *Churches* in the *World*? And we are willing to leave the *Issue* to that,
if

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if it can appear either from *Scripture* or *Antiquity*. Besides, the *Reason* of the Thing; for as *Gregory the Great* urg'd against *John of Constantinople*, if there was an *Universal Bishop*, the *Universal Church* must fall, if that one *Universal Bishop* fell; and so all must come to center in One Poor, Fallible, Mortal Man.

This oblig'd the *Pope* to run into another monstrous *Extream*, and set up for *Infallibility* in his own *Person*, as the only *Successor* of *St. Peter*, and *Heir* of those *Promises* made to Him, *super hanc Petram*, &c. This was the Current *Doctrine* of the *Divines* in the *Church of Rome*, in former Ages, as you may see in *BELLARMINE, de Rom. Pontif. l. 4. c. 5.* Where he carries this so high, as to Assert, That if the *Pope* did Command the Practice of *Vice*, and Forbid *Virtue*, the *Church* were Bound to Believe that *Virtue* was *Vice*, and that *Vice* was *Virtue*. And in his *Preface*, he calls this Absolute *Supremacy* of the *Pope*, the *Summa rei Christianæ*, the *Sum* and *Foundation* of the *Christian Religion*. And that to Deny it, was not only a Simple *Error*, but a Pernicious *Heresie*.

This was *Old Popery*: But now it is generally Decry'd by the *Papists* themselves; yet no *Pope* has been brought to *Renounce* it, they will not Quit *Claim*.

When they departed from the *Infallibility* of the *Pope*, they sought to place it in their *General Councils*: But these are not always in Being; and so their *Infallibility* must Drop
for

for several *Ages* together; which will not consist with their *Argument*, That *God* is oblig'd by His *Goodness*, to Afford *always* an *outward* and *living Judge* and *Guide* to His *Church*. Besides, that *Instances* are found, where those *Councils* they call *General*, have contradicted one another.

For which *Reasons*, others of them place the *Infallibility* in the *Church Diffusive*: But this upon their *Scheme* is *Indefinite*, and the *Judge* of *Controversy* must be sought among numberless *Individuals*, of whom no One is the *Judge* or *Guide*.

XII. Of *Infallibility* in the *Church*.

But there is an *Infallibility* in the *Church*, not *Personal* in any One or *All* of *Christians* put together; for *Millions* of *Fallibles* can never make an *Infallible*. But the *Infallibility* consists in the *Nature* of the *Evidence*, which having all the *four Marks* mention'd in *The Short Method with the Deists*, cannot possibly be *False*. As you and I believe there is such a *Town* as *Constantinople*, that there was such a *Man* as *Henry VIII.* as much as if we had seen them with our *Eyes*: Not from the *Credit* of any *Historian* or *Travel-ler*, all of whom are *Fallible*; but from the *Nature* of the *Evidence*, wherein it is *Im-possible* for Men to have *Conspir'd* and carry'd it on without *Contradiction*, if it were *False*.

Thus, whatever *Doctrine* has been Taught in the *Church*, (according to the Rule of *Vincentius*

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Vincentius Lirinensis) *Semper, ubique, & ab omnibus*, is the *Christian Doctrine*; for in this Case, such *Doctrine* is a *Fact*, and having the foresaid *Marks*, must be a true *Fact*, viz. That such *Doctrine* was so *Taught* and *Receiv'd*.

This was the Method taken in the *Council* call'd at *Alexandria* against *Arius*, it was ask'd by *Alexander* the *Arch-Socrat. Hist. l. i. c. v. Gr.* *Bishop* who Presided, *Quis unquam talia audivit?* Who ever heard of this *Doctrine* before? And it being Answer'd by all the *Bishops* there Assembled in the *Negative*, it was concluded a *Novel Doctrine*, and contrary to what had been *Universally* Receiv'd in the *Christian Church*. Thus every *Doctrine* may be reduc'd to *Fact*; for it is purely *Fact*, whether such *Doctrine* was *Receiv'd*, or not?

And a *Council* Assembled upon such an Occasion, *stands* as *Evidence* of the *Fact*, not as *Judges* of the *Faith*; which they cannot alter by their *Votes* or *Authority*.

A *Council* has *Authority* in *Matters of Discipline* in the *Church*; but in *Matters of Faith*, what is called their *Authority*, is their *Attestation* to the *Truth* of *Fact*; which if it has the *Marks* before-mention'd, must be *Infallibly* True: Not from the *Infallibility* of Any or All of the *Persons*, but from the *Nature* of the *Evidence*, as before is said.

And this is the surest Rule, whereby to Judge of *Doctrines*, and to know what the *Catholick*

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Catholick Church had *Believ'd* and *Taught*, as *Receiv'd* from the *Apostles*.

And they who refuse to be *Try'd* by this *Rule*, who say, we care not what was *Believ'd* by the *Catholick Church*, either in former Ages, or now; we think our own *Interpretations* or *Criticisms* upon such a *Text*, of as great *Authority* as theirs; these are justly to be *Suspected*, nay, it is *Evident*, that they are *Broaching* some *Novel Doctrines*, which cannot stand this *Test*. Besides the monstrous *Arrogance* in such a Pretence, these overthrow the *Foundation* of that sure and *Infalible Evidence* upon which *Christianity* it self does stand; and reduce All to a *Blind Enthusiasm*.

XIII. Of Episcopacy.

But further, Sir, in your Search after a *Church*, you must not only consider the *Doctrine* but the *Government*; that is, as I said before, you must consider the *Church*, not only as a *Seēt*, but as a *Society*: For tho' every *Society* founded upon the Belief of such *Tenets*, may be call'd a *Seēt*, yet every *Seēt* is not a *Society*. Now a *Society* cannot be without *Government*, for it is that which makes a *Society*: And a *Government* cannot be without *Governors*. The *Apostles* were Instituted by *Christ*, the first *Governors* of his *Church*; and with them and their *Succeſsors* He has Promis'd to be, to the End of the *World*.

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World. The *Apostles* did Ordain *Bishops*, as *Governors*, in all the *Churches* which they Planted throughout the whole World; and these *Bishops* were esteem'd the *Successors* of the *Apostles*, each in his own *Church*, from the Beginning to this Day. This was the Current Notion and Language of Antiquity. *Omnes Apostolorum Successores sunt.* That all *Bishops* were the *Successors* of the *Apostles*. As St. *Jerom* speaks, *Epist. ad Evagr.* And St. *Ignatius*, who was Constituted by the *Apostles* *Bishop* of *Antioch*, salutes the *Church* of the *Trallians*, *Ἐν τῷ πληρώματι ἐν Ἀποστολικῇ χρεατῆει.* In the Plenitude of the Apostolical Character. Thus it continu'd from the Days of the *Apostles*, to those of *John Calvin*. In all the which Time there was not any one *Church* in the whole *Christian* World, that was not *Episcopal*. But now it is said by our *Dissenters*, That there is no need of *Succession* from the *Apostles* or those *Bishops* Instituted by them: That they can make *Governors* over themselves whom they list: And what signifies the *Government* of the *Church*, so the *Doctrine* be Pure? But this totally Dissolves the *Church* as a *Society*; the *Government* of which consists in the *Right* and *Title* of the *Governor*. And as the *Apostle* says, *No Man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.* And the Dispute betwixt him and *Korah* was not as to any Point either of *Doctrine* or *Worship*, but meerly upon that of

of *Church Government*. And St. Jude, ver. 11. brings down the same Case to that of the *Christian Church*. And Reason Carries it as to all *Societies*. They who will not *Obe*y the Lawful *Governor*, but set up another in Opposition to him, are no longer of the *Society*, but *Enemies* to it, and Justly *Forfeit* all the *Rights* and *Privileges* of it.

Now Considering that all the *Promises* in the *Gospel*, are Made to the *Church*, what a Dreadful Thing must it be, to be *Excluded* from all these!

Besides, the *Church* is call'd the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, as being a *Society* Instituted by *Christ*, for the Support and Preservation of the *Faith*. This no Particular *Church* can Attribute to it self, otherwise than as being a *Part* of the *Whole*: And therefore, as St. Cyprian says, *Christ made the College of Bishops numerous, that if one provid Heretical, or sought to Devour the Flock, the Rest might Interpose for the Saving of it*. This is equally against letting the whole Depend upon one *Universal Bishop*; and against throwing off the whole *Episcopate*, that is, all the *Bishops* in the World; which wou'd be a total *Dissolution* of the *Church* as a *Society*, by leaving no *Governors* in it; or, which is the same, Setting up *Governors* of our own Head, without any *Authority* or *Succession* from the *Apostles*; which is rendering the whole *Precarious*, and without any *Foundation*. And it is a Supposing that *Providence* is more Oblig'd to Stand by a
Church

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Church set up in Direct *Opposition* to His *Institution*, than by that *Church* which *Christ* Himself has *founded*, and Promis'd to be with it to the *End* of the *World*. And tho' He has permitted *Errors* and *Heresies* to overspread several Parts of it, at several Times, for the Probation of the *Elect*, like the *Wain- ing* of the *Moon*, yet has He not left Him- self without *Witness*, and has Restor'd *Light* to Her, pursuant to His Promise, *that the Gates of Hell should not prevail against Her*: And this by the Means of his *Servants* and *Substitutes*, the *Bishops* of his *Church*, whom He has not deserted. All of whom, through the whole *World* always did, and still do Maintain and own the *Apostolick Creed*. And wherein some, as the *Arians*, have perverted the Sense of some *Articles*, that lasted but a short Time; and the *Truth* has been more confirm'd by it, in the unanimous *Consent* and *Testimony* of the whole *Episcopal College*, to the *Primitive Doctrine* which they had Receiv'd from the *Beginning*. God *Heal'd* these *Heresies* in His own Way, by the *Bishops* and *Governours* of His *Church*, whom he had Appointed, and without any *Infra- ction* upon His own *Institution*.

And it is observable, That these *Heresies* began by *Infraction*, which Men made upon His *Institution* of *Bishops*, as *Arius*, an Am- bitious *Presbyter*, first rose up against his *Bishop*, before he was given up to that vile *Heresie*, which he vented afterwards by De- grees, to Gain a Party after him, thereby to

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Maintain the *Opposition* which he had made against his *Bishop*: And, by a Just Judgment, he *Fell* from one *Error* to another, till he at last Compleated that Detestable *Herésie* which bears his *Name*.

And in all the *Annals* of the *Church*, whether under the *Law* or the *Gospel*, there is not one *Instance* of a *Schism* against the *Priesthood*, which *God* had Appointed; but great *Errors* in *Doctrine* and *Worship* did follow it. Thus the *Priesthood*, which *Micah* set up of his own Head, and that which *Jeroboam* set up in Opposition to that of *Aaron*, both ended in *Idolatry*. Thus the *Novations* and *Donatists*, who made *Schisms* against their *Bishops*, fell into grievous *Errors*, tho' they did not renounce the *Faith*.

And into what gross *Errors*, both as to *Doctrine* and *Worship*, has the *Church* of *Rome* fallen, since her *Bishop* set up for *Universality*, and thereby Commenc'd that Grand *Schism* against all the *Bishops* of the Earth, whom he sought to *Depress* under him; but while he would Thrust other *Churches* from him, he Thrust himself from the *Catholick Church*.

What *Hydra Heresies*, and Monstrous *Sects* (*fifty* or *sixty* at one Time, of which we have the *Names*) flow'd like a *Torrent* into *England*, in the Times of *Forty-One*, after *Episcopacy* was thrown down!

So evident is that Saying, That the *Church* is the *Pillar and Ground of the Truth*, that

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we can hardly find any *Error* which has come into the *Church*, but upon an *Infraction* made upon the *Episcopal* Authority.

XIV. *An Infallible Demonstration of*
Episcopacy.

For which this is to be said, That it has all the *Four Marks* before-mention'd, to ascertain any *Fact*, in the concurrent *Testimony* of all *Churches*, at all *Times*; And therefore must *infallibly* be the *Government* which the *Apostles* left upon the Earth. To which we must adhere, till a greater *Authority* than *Theirs* shall alter it.

I doubt not but all this will determine you to the *Church of England*. And keep you firm to *Episcopacy*, as a Matter not *indifferent*.

And I Pray God, that *He who hath begun a Good Work in you, may perfect it until the Day of JESUS CHRIST.* Amen.

July 17. 1704.

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